

April 9, 1979

LB 589

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President, members of the body, this is a very simple amendment. It basically strikes \$5,000 out of the Equal Opportunity Commission. The \$5,000 is being asked for for study, to fund the management consultants to look at the department and to come up with various ways of improving the operations in the process. The \$5,000 is not a major fund, not a major amount of money, but on the other hand I think that we have some other departments and some other places here where we can, in fact, provide that same review at state expense without additional funds. I think we contract out far too many studies. This is one study I don't think we need and for that reason I ask your support in striking \$5,000 from the Equal opportunity Commission.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Warner, do you wish to be heard on this?

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, probably a prime reason that the committee went along with this request, some of you will recall that in the last couple of years there have been substantial backlog of cases filed before the Equal Opportunity Commission. We have over the years, the last two years at least, given them some additional caseworkers to help expedite that backlog and considerable progress has been made. There was not a request this year for additional staff to do it but they did have a request that related to this one which was to have someone come in to assess maybe in developing their management capabilities within the agency to help assist in handling that caseload. We also approved some educational programs which is listed in the yellow book for staff to, an inservice training, to expedite and to help reduce that caseload and I think the general feeling of the committee was or is that these two areas might be a better solution than additional staff to help further reduce the backlog and catch up on the number of cases that have been filed. So in summary, the reason for the recommendation is to help improve their internal operation to handle the backlog as opposed to additional staff people which has been the alternative the last couple of years.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Fowler.

SENATOR FOWLER: I rise to oppose Senator Newell's effort. In discussion, and we discussed this extensively in the Appropriations Committee, our feeling was that this agency had reached a point in its history that it may be valuable for it to get an outward look and an outward assessment as far as procedures, practices, its training and utilization