

## Assembly

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### MINUTES OF MEETING - COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS - 55TH NEVADA ASSEMBLY SESSION FEBRUARY 4, 1969

Present: Swallow, Frazzini, Homer, Reid and Foote  
(Schouweiler and Hilbrecht arrived later as indicated herein)

Absent: None

Also Present: Cy Ryan, UPI; Vick Nash, Gazette-Journal News Bureau; Bill Thorpe, Carson News Bureau; Mort Saltzman, A.P.; and Dr. Homer's legislative intern, Julie Utt, Carson City.

Chairman Swallow convened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. and requested that all comments be addressed to the chair in view of the number of interested persons present.

Mrs. Foote asked whether anyone knew how the age of 21 was established as the legal voting age and Dr. Homer replied that the reason for this was that it had been determined that growth occurs in three stages: age 7 when children are beginning their schooling; age 14 when the child reached puberty and age 21 when they are considered to be mature and fully responsible for their actions.

Those bills on the agenda were presented as AJR 7 and AJR 8, Amendments to the constitution lowering voting ages to 19 and 18, respectively, and Chairman Swallow requested comments on same. Mr. Reid stated that he believed the people should be allowed to vote at an earlier age because they are taking part in political affairs at a much earlier age. More of our young people become involved in campaign work during high school and are ready to take an active part when they graduate. During their schooling, they are constantly in touch with politics and many times they lose interest because there is quite a length of time between graduation and the age of 21. Then continued by saying he felt the age of 19 was more logical than 18 because the states now having a lower voting age have established the ages at 19 and 20, thus setting a precedent. Also, some people are still in high school at the age of 18 and he felt they should be graduated prior to being allowed to vote.

Dr. Homer, in favor of the 18 year old vote, stated that our laws are established on the age of 18 as shown by our crime laws. The argument heard most often is "if they are old enough to fight for their country, they are old enough to vote." Should AJR be the bill introduced, a lot of our laws would have to be changed to coincide with it.

Mr. Reid stated that the bills were in no way party issues and that although Speaker McKissick was in favor of AJR 7, other Republicans are behind AJR 8. He prefers the age of 19 being introduced. However, rather than see both bills die, he would support AJR 8. Dr. Homer agreed that this was not a partisan decision and that each bill stands on its own merits. Mr. Reid suggested that perhaps one way to solve the situation would be to report both bills to the floor.

Mrs. Foote announced that she was not in favor of either bill and stated her reasons therefor. The young today are being pushed into maturity at an excessive pace such as starting them in school at the age of three. She was not in favor when they lowered the drafting age, and she is not in favor of lowering the voting age.

During the war, Dr. Homer had worked with mental patients and he stated that the majority of those patients had come from well-to-homes where they had never been given responsibilities when young. They were therefore unable to cope with the problems presented during war-time, but in contrast, there were no patients from the slum areas where those men had to fare for themselves at a young age.

As to younger people being more easily swayed, Mr. Swallow stated that often we find 15 and 16 year old children more mature than some 50 and 60 years of age. Discussion was then held as to the term "old enough to fight - old enough to vote". Mr. Swallow noted that normally when a man enters the service or college, he must begin to think for himself whether he likes it or not and he felt the people should be given the right to make the decision whether the voting age should be lowered.

Mr. Reid asked the committee to voice their individual opinions on the bills whereupon Mrs. Foote negated both of them. Mrs. Frazzini said she felt the committee was bound to make a decision one way or the other no matter how difficult and that she was in favor of a younger voting age. Those youngsters who are irresponsible would probably not register anyway, a situation which we find with many over 21. Those who did register would be proclaiming an interest in the future and most likely become a benefit to all.

Dr. Homer then moved that AJR 8 be given a Do Pass and introduced to the Assembly Floor thus securing the standing laws.

Chairman Swallow stated that in order to work in an organized manner, the committee was required to choose one of the bills and at that point he was inclined to lean toward AJR 8.

(Mr. Schouweiler arrived at the meeting at this time.)

When asked his views on AJR 7 and AJR 8, Mr. Schouweiler stated that he was in favor of lowering the voting age to 18. Discussion was then held as to which bill would have the best chance of passage and Mr. Reid said that the general public did not like changes and he felt AJR 7 had a better chance.

Mr. Schouweiler continued by saying that in last year's session, the committee had voted 3 to 2 against lowering the voting age after it had passed the Senate by a vote of 18 to 2. He feels that since that time, the subject has become well known to the public and most are thinking about the matter. He also indicated that two successive governors, Sawyer and Laxalt, have supported lowering the voting age and both parties, Democrat and Republican, have indicated their approval. In his opinion, both bills should not be moved to the Assembly and he then proposed that the committee hold AJR 7 and introduce AJR 8. In that way, should the Assembly fail to return the bill, AJR 7 would still be available for consideration.

At that point, Mr. Schouweiler moved that Dr. Homer's motion be amended to read AJR 8 be given a Do Pass and introduced to the Assembly Floor and AJR 7 be retained in committee pending disposition of AJR 8. Motion seconded by Frazzini.

Mr. Hilbrecht then arrived at the meeting and was asked if he had any comments prior to the vote. The situation to that point was explained and the vote was taken resulting in 5 for Do Pass and 2 against. Majority ruled.

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Chairman Swallow then presented A.B. 4 and stated that Professor Wright from University of Nevada at Las Vegas would be present at the next meeting.

Discussion was then held regarding certain amendments to Mr. Hilbrecht's bill on presidential primaries. Mr. Hilbrecht stated that his amendments would consist of requiring earlier primaries and when they would be held. He asked if the committee preferred having elections earlier than New Hampshire and it was agreed that Nevada could profit by doing this. It is reported that New Hampshire gains quite a bit through their early primary and in view of the advantages in Nevada, such as weather, accommodations and attractions, Nevada could profit through them also. Mr. Hilbrecht then moved for Amendment to A.B. 4 which would establish earlier primaries than those of New Hampshire. Motion was seconded by Mr. Reid and unanimously passed.

Chairman Swallow then presented S.B. 8, providing for filling of legislative vacancies in multicounty districts by the Governor. Discussion was held and Mr. Hilbrecht moved that S.B. 8 be indefinitely tabled. Dr. Homer seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Discussion was held on a bill proposed by Mr. Reid which might possibly be presented to this committee. The bill concerned election of trustees of the hospital board, county commissioners being replaced by trustees. Since the bill could go to either elections or government affairs, the committee should give the bill some thought.

Chairman Swallow announced that the next meeting would be held Friday Morning at 8:00 a.m.

Meeting was adjourned.