

Members

Sen. Thomas Wyss, Chairperson  
Sen. Michael Young  
Sen. Charles Meeks  
Sen. Lindel Hume  
Sen. Timothy Lanane  
Sen. Mark Blade  
Rep. Vernon Smith, Vice-Chairperson  
Rep. Jerry Denbo  
Rep. Ron Liggett  
Rep. Ralph Ayres  
Rep. James Buck  
Rep. Eric Turner



# INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON LABOR, STATE AND HUMAN AFFAIRS ISSUES

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Authority: HEA 1001-2002

## MEETING MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

Meeting Date: October 24, 2002  
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.  
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 431  
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana  
Meeting Number: 3

**Members Present:** Sen. Thomas Wyss, Chairperson; Sen. Michael Young; Sen. Charles Meeks; Sen. Lindel Hume; Rep. Vernon Smith, Vice-Chairperson; Rep. Jerry Denbo; Rep. Ron Liggett; Rep. Ralph Ayres; Rep. James Buck; Rep. Eric Turner.

**Members Absent:** Sen. Timothy Lanane; Sen. Mark Blade.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

Senator Wyss called the third meeting of the Committee to order at 10:10 a.m. and introduced the members of the Committee. The Committee adopted the minutes of the September 20, 2002, meeting by voice vote. Senator Wyss stated that the Committee would discuss, amend, and vote on the final report and but not receive public testimony.

### 2. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT FINAL REPORT

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Representative Denbo proposed several changes to the section of the draft final report concerning economic development alternatives for French Lick and West Baden. First, Representative Denbo explained that while the French Lick airport has the second longest runway in southern Indiana, Orange County does not have the second largest airport in the state. Next, Representative Denbo indicated that while the West Baden Springs Hotel is for sale for \$35 million, the cost of additional renovations could total more than \$70 million. Next, Representative Denbo commented that Orange County officials have already commenced marketing the area for tourism and asked that the report reflect their continuing efforts. Finally, Representative Denbo asked that the report state that the representatives for the French Lick Springs Hotel presented documentation that the hotel had lost over \$1 million in tourism business to area riverboat casinos. The Committee adopted each of these changes by voice vote.

Representative Liggett proposed that the Committee recommend the creation of a commission on Native American issues. Senator Wyss explained a Native American commission is unnecessary because the issues and problems brought to the Committee by Native Americans were not unique to Native Americans, whereas the problems that were encountered by black males and Hispanics and that led to the creation of their respective commissions were unique to each population.

Representative V. Smith stated that he had co-authored an earlier bill to establish a Native American commission. Representative Smith indicated that the cost of a Native American commission would be minimal and that the commission would provide a forum for Native Americans' unique problems and provide an impetus for Native Americans to seek more leadership positions. Representative Smith suggested that legislative action is necessary to establish the commission because the Governor would not be required to follow the Committee's recommendation in its draft final report to expand the scope and responsibilities of the existing Native American Council.

Senator Wyss indicated he would not support a recommendation to establish a Native American commission and suggested combining the activities of a Native American commission with the existing Commission on the Status of Black Males. Representative Smith stated that he would not support combining the two commissions because the problems and issues each group faces are distinct. Senator Hume reiterated that Native Americans face different problems and issues and commented that the Native American population in Indiana is probably greater than the 2000 United States census indicates. Senator Hume stated that it is important for the General Assembly to acknowledge the scope of the problems faced by Native Americans and to establish a Native American commission. Representative Buck voiced his support for creating a Native American commission, saying the Committee would be in error if it failed to see the need for a forum at which Native Americans could discuss the issues and problems they encounter.

In response to a question from Representative Turner, Senator Wyss stated that the cost of establishing a Native American commission is not a problem, but that the issues the Native American population faces are not unique and that creating a commission that adequately represents Indiana's diverse Native American population could be problematic. Senator Wyss again suggested that expanding the scope of the existing Native American Council would provide a needed forum for Native Americans. Sally Tuttle, a member of the Native American Council, informed the Committee that only four members of the Council are Native Americans and that the remaining members are archaeologists or historians. Representative Smith commented that a Native American commission is needed to address the social issues faced by Native Americans, not the archaeological issues studied by the existing Council.

Senator Michael Young stated that Indiana is a diverse state inhabited by many different racial and ethnic groups, but that there cannot be a commission for every group in the state, or for every problem or issue. Representative Smith suggested that the Committee compromise by amending the draft final report to include a recommendation that the Governor expand the membership of the Native American Council to include more Native American members. Representative Liggett then moved that the Committee recommend establishing a commission on American Indian and Native Alaskan issues in place of the recommendation proposed in the draft final report to expand the scope and responsibilities of the Native American Council. The Committee voted 7 (Senators Hume and Meeks and Representatives Ayres, Buck, Denbo, Liggett, and Smith) to 3 (Senators Wyss and Michael Young and Representative Turner) in favor of recommending the establishment of a commission on American Indian and Native Alaskan issues. The Committee incorporated this change into its final report.

### 3. ADJOURNMENT

Senator Wyss adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.