

Community Living Facilities Task Force Meeting

Minutes

1/12/78

Attended: Stan Stein, Esq., Leader, Tom Halloran, Esq., Bob Nelkin, Erroll Miller, Esq., Jerome Schneier, Don Nicholson, Ray Firth, and Susan Brownlee, Teri Polack, and Mary Lou Dailey - UMH Staff.

Guests: Judge Tamlia, Juvenile Court; Mr. Peters, Allegheny County MH/MR, Mrs. Nancy Bierwerth, A.C.Y.S.C.; Miss D. Reinhard, C.W.S.; Dianne Nichols, Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania; Annette Kolski-Andreaco, C.E.A.; Frank Zeno, V.A. Hospital; and Shirley Levine, National Council of Jewish Women - Pittsburgh Section.

Stan Stein opened the meeting. He stated that S.B. 94 was voted out of the House Health and Welfare Committee on January 4, 1978. The Bill, however, was amended to include "dependent children" and to exclude (drop) the mentally ill and emotionally disturbed.

House Health and Welfare Committee Meeting - S.B. 94

The amendment to drop the mentally ill and emotionally disturbed was passed by only 2 votes. The amendment was introduced by Representative Schweder and seconded by Representative McLane. The exclusion came from a fear that the criminally insane would be included under the mentally ill. As the Bill can still be amended, an amendment is being written that would reinstate emotionally disturbed children and the mentally ill but exclude dangerous people. Once written, a legal opinion will be obtained from the Department of Welfare to ensure the amendment legally excludes dangerous people.

Tom also advised that Judge Tamlia's presentation before the Committee was instrumental in the Committee's accepting dependent children and voting the Bill out of committee.

Strategy

Support the Bill and request it be amended as mentioned previously. If the Bill does not have the votes on the House floor it is dead. If it passes on the floor but is not amended, we will have it amended in conference committee. (The Bill must go back to the Senate for approval of the amendments. If the Senate does not approve, the Bill goes into conference committee. A conference committee is expected unless the House amends the Bill to include the mentally ill with clarification and the emotionally disturbed).

A list of representatives from Allegheny County was distributed. Participants volunteered to get in touch with each representative and call Sue Brownlee - UMH staff person - with the representatives response. Everyone was asked to send letters to all representatives urging their support for the Bill and requesting an amendment to include the mentally ill (with clarification) and emotionally disturbed children.

There will be an effort made on the House floor to have the Bill recommitted to the Local Government Committee. This move would kill the Bill and should be strongly discouraged. There are four representatives from Allegheny County on the Local Government Committee: Representatives Trello, Logue, Gamble, and Abraham.

Tom reviewed the argument of state overriding local authorities. He explained that S.B. 94 would help local authorities by preventing over saturation of neighborhoods and put an end to the numerous legal zoning battles that they must deal with case by case.