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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

## WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

**2013-14**

(session year)

**Assembly**

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on...**  
**State Affairs and Government Operations**  
**(AC-SAGO)**

### **INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL**

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
  - (**ab** = Assembly Bill)                      (**ar** = Assembly Resolution)                      (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
  - (**sb** = Senate Bill)                              (**sr** = Senate Resolution)                              (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

\* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (December 2014)

## Assembly

### Record of Committee Proceedings

#### **Committee on State Affairs and Government Operations**

##### **Senate Bill 245**

Relating to: applications for public assistance programs, offenses in public assistance programs, granting rule-making authority, and providing a penalty. By Senators Darling, Gudex, Grothman, Kedzie, Lazich, Leibham and Olsen; cosponsored by Representatives Nygren, Krug, Knodl, Endsley, Jacque, Kaufert, Kerkman, Kestell, Kleefisch, Nass, J. Ott, Pridemore, Sanfelippo, Schraa and Strachota.

January 15, 2014      Referred to Committee on State Affairs and Government Operations

February 05, 2014      **Public Hearing Held**

Present:    (13)    Representative Weininger; Representatives Swearingen, Craig, Ripp, Neylon, Kooyenga, Hutton, Nass, Sinicki, Zamarripa, Ringhand, Kahl and Hulsey.

Absent:    (1)    Representative Knodl.

Excused:   (2)    Representatives Kleefisch and Kessler.

##### Appearances For

- Alberta Darling - Sen. - 8th Senate District

##### Appearances Against

- None.

##### Appearances for Information Only

- None.

##### Registrations For

- None.

##### Registrations Against

- None.

##### Registrations for Information Only

- None.

February 12, 2014      **Executive Session Held**

Present:    (16)    Representative Weininger; Representatives Swearingen, Craig, Kleefisch, Knodl, Ripp,

Neylon, Kooyenga, Hutton, Nass, Sinicki,  
Zamarripa, Ringhand, Kessler, Kahl and  
Hulsey.

Absent: (0) None.

Excused: (0) None.

Moved by Representative Craig, seconded by Representative Nass  
that **Senate Bill 245** be recommended for concurrence.

Ayes: (15) Representative Weininger; Representatives  
Swearingen, Craig, Kleefisch, Knodl, Ripp,  
Neylon, Kooyenga, Hutton, Nass, Sinicki,  
Ringhand, Kessler, Kahl and Hulsey.

Noes: (1) Representative Zamarripa.

CONCURRENCE RECOMMENDED, Ayes 15, Noes 1

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Alison Zikmund  
Committee Clerk



**Alberta Darling**  
**Wisconsin State Senator**  
Member, Joint Committee on Finance

Dear Chairman Weininger and committee members:

Back in July, the Milwaukee Journal found a mother and her daughter receiving upwards of \$150,000 in public assistance over the last five years while collecting thousands of dollars every month from several rental properties in the Milwaukee area. This same woman was tied to \$4 million worth of rental properties.

Unfortunately for taxpayers, this was not an isolated incident.

This fall, the Journal Sentinel reported about a Mequon businessman who owns or co-owns four rental properties, runs a math and reading tutoring business and lives in a \$460,000 home received tax-payer funded food and health benefits.

Stories like these prompted the Governor to ask the Department of Health Services (DHS) to come up with some internal policies, among the changes are reinstating asset limits for people seeking food benefits; requiring people who report they are self-employed to submit tax returns; improving data communication among all state departments; and creating a fraud prevention task force.

Abuse of public funds is a real problem for the state of Wisconsin costing taxpayers money and reducing the amount of funds available to help people who are in need of assistance. This bill will send a message that fraud will not be tolerated stealing from people who these programs are designed to help is a crime.

Senate Bill 245 would move statutory provisions with criminal penalties for public assistance fraud from Chapter 49: Social Services, to the criminal code – Chapter 946: Crimes against Government and its Administration. Under the bill, the Department of Justice or a district attorney is authorized to prosecute violations of criminal laws affecting *any* public assistance program, including W-2, FoodShare and MA.

Currently local district attorneys can request help from the Justice Department, but cases often go unprosecuted because of a lack of local resources. It takes up time, it's expensive for them, and they just don't have the personnel to handle this when violent criminals fill up the court rooms.

This bill should work in correlation with the governor's six strategies for increasing fraud prevention and internal policy changes within DHS.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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# Wisconsin's 8th Senate District

