

MEMORANDUM

Special Committee on Aging United States Senate

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WILLIAM E. ORIOL, Staff Director
DAVID A. AFFELDT, Chief Counsel
VAL J. HALAMANDARIS, Associate Counsel
JOHN GUY MILLER, Minority Staff Director

Room G-225 Dirksen Senate Office Building / Washington, D.C. 20510 / Phone 202-224-5364 / Minority Phone 202-224-1467

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SENATE REORGANIZATION PLAN CALLS FOR END OF COMMITTEE ON AGING

A proposed Senate reorganization plan, issued on September 29 by the Temporary Select Committee to Study the Senate Committee System, calls for abolition of the Senate Special Committee on Aging.

The "Committee on Committees" was established by Senate resolution earlier this year. One of the major objectives of the plan described on September 29 is to reduce the number of Senate Committees by more than half, from 31 to 15.

Along with the Committee on Aging, all other special or select committees would be terminated, with the exception of the new Select Committee on Intelligence.

The Committee on Committees intends to issue a resolution embodying its recommendations before it completes its work by November 15.

A new resolution would then probably go before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration for action in 1977. Members of the Committee on Committees are urging priority attention to their resolution in January.

The Proposals: The Committee on Committees devoted 5 months of study to their task before recommending what Chairman Adlai Stevenson calls "the most sweeping change ever seriously contemplated for the operation of the Senate."

A Committee on Committees press release said that the Senate's present 176 subcommittees would be reduced to approximately 100 and that scheduling of committee meetings would be made easier by the reduction and by a computerized scheduling service.

"...temporary committees [including Aging]," said the release, "are limited to studies and investigations and do not report legislation, often duplicating the work of parallel standing committees that do have legislative jurisdiction."

The release also said that Senators' energies are now "dissipated" in several committees related to human resources, including the Committee on Aging.

Under the new jurisdictional plan: functions of the Committee on Aging's Subcommittees on Health, Services, and Employment and Retirement Income would be placed under the new "Human Resources" Committee; functions of the Committee on Aging's Subcommittee on Consumer Interests of the Elderly would go to a new "Commerce, Science, and Transportation" Committee. No specific mention is made of transfer of functions for the Committee on Aging's Subcommittees on Long-Term Care, Housing for the Elderly, or Retirement and the Individual.

Church, Fong Concern: Senators Frank Church, Chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, and Hiram Fong, Ranking Republican Member, wrote to Senator Stevenson on September 16 to express their concern about any proposal which would terminate the work of the Committee on Aging.

The Senators' statement, to be included in the Committee on Committees' hearing transcript, said: "It should be remembered that two years of work by a Subcommittee on Problems of the Aged and Aging of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare preceded establishment of the full Committee (in 1961). That Subcommittee, after intensive hearings and investigations, concluded that a special Committee was needed to do full justice to the large number of concerns related to Federal policies and actions related to aging."

In many ways since 1961, said the Senators' statement, the Committee on Aging has complemented the work of standing committees.

"For example," it said, "Senator Moss's recent revelations about Medicaid fraud and abuse have helped the Finance Committee advance important provisions of Senator Talmadge's Medicare and Medicaid Reform Act."

The Senators also said: "The proliferation of elderly concerns, the ever-increasing proportion of our citizenry above the age of 65, and the tremendous increase in Federal programs and Federal dollars directed at these areas argue that the need for the Special Committee is even greater in 1976 and that it will continue to increase."

The statement also noted that the House of Representatives, after intensive study, decided in October 1974 to establish its own Permanent Select Committee on Aging structured along the lines of its Senate counterpart.

CONGRESS OVERRIDES LABOR-HEW VETO; RECORD FUNDING FOR AoA

The Fiscal 1977 Labor-HEW Appropriations Act became law (P.L. 94-439) on September 30, after the House (by a vote of 312 to 93) and the Senate (by a vote of 67 to 15) overrode President Ford's veto. A funding level of \$401.6 million is provided for the Administration on Aging, the highest level in history. In addition, \$90.6 million is