

MINUTES
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 10, 2021

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Crane, Vice Chairman Armstrong, Representatives Palmer, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, Monks, Scott, Andrus, Young, Furniss, Hanks, Skaug, Gannon, Mathias

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: Kirk Adams - Middleton School Board, Karen Echeverria - Idaho School Board Association, Andy Grover - Idaho Association of School Administrators, Jonathan Gillan - West Ada School District, Jason Hancock - Secretary of State's Office

Rep. Crane called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Mathias** made a motion to approve meeting minutes from February 4, 2021 and February 8, 2021. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 28460: **Rep. Christensen** presented **RS 28460**. This proposed legislation was already presented and introduced for printing with amended language. Due to an error, the language was not included. **RS 28460** would allow school district employees, with an enhanced concealed weapons license, to carry a concealed weapon on school property. The amended language is included to reflect the desire of the committee.

MOTION: **Rep. Hanks** made a motion to introduce **RS 28460**.

During discussion **Rep. Christensen** provide an example. If a gun is discharged, a lawsuit is filed and a jury finds there is no recklessness, no civil penalty would be issued. He also said that there is no duty to perform for those carrying a concealed weapon. Staff would have the ability to defend themselves and their students.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:** **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Mathias** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**.

RS 28432: **Rep. Troy** presented **RS 28432** clarifying that employees of Idaho public universities or colleges must not offer extra credit to students to vote or not vote or to influence a vote for or against a candidate or ballot measure. She stated that maintaining neutrality is critical, as an employee.

The committee requested the word shall be used consistently. Language in this proposed legislation uses shall and must interchangeably. The committee prefers the word shall, stating that it is a stronger word than must. When asked to change the word must to shall in the Statement of Purpose (SOP), the presenter declined.

MOTION: **Rep. Scott** made a motion to introduce **RS 28432** and change must to shall in the SOP. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 106: **Rep. Barbieri** presented **H 106**, eliminating the August election date. The bill will help ensure election integrity. School levies are the only items on this ballot. There are no federal or state ballot items. Elimination of this election date will provide County Clerks to clean up the voter registration lists, perform scheduled maintenance to the voting machines and provide training to election staff.

Jeff Dillon, Wilder School District, **Kirk Adams**, **Karen Echeverria**, **Andy Grover**, and **Jonathan Gillan** spoke in opposition to **H 106**. Eliminating the August election date would be devastating to school budgets and programs. School districts set their budgets in June for the following July, 13 months later. Budgets are set and then the Legislature makes its education appropriation. At that time, school districts know if their budgets fall short. When they do, the district has time to put a levy on the ballot and educate their voters for the August election. It was noted that levies make up to 40% of some rural school budgets. They said it is important to run the levies after setting their budgets in June so schools can continue to offer all of their programs. It was noted farmers have a difficult time turning out for March and May elections because they are busy in the fields. Recall elections also take place in August. The individuals testifying all asked the committee to keep the four election dates in place.

Jason Hancock testified in support of **H 106**. He said that eliminating the August election date would provide a five week window for the County Clerks offices to do scheduled maintenance, training and clean up the voter registration list leading up to the November general election. Mr. Hancock said in relation to fiscal impact, the Legislature set up sales tax for consolidated elections in counties 11 years ago. The cost for running elections is ongoing, including equipment replacement and the labor costs associated with the elections.

Idaho's country clerks are in favor of eliminating the August election date. He said that a county clerk could walk the committee through the process of list maintenance. There are several variables. **Mr. Hancock** said it can be complicated because school districts don't follow precinct boundaries. It is not uncommon for small portions of a school district to fall within a different county and voters in those area can be assigned to mail-in voting only.

MOTION: **Rep. Scott** made a motion to send **H 106** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

During discussion, it was stated that it would be better to eliminate the March election date because it would help schools with bolstering their budgets through levies. August is a tool in the schools' toolkit. Preserve that tool for them.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Reps. Furniss, Mathias**, and **Gannon** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**. **Rep. Barbieri** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Representative Crane
Chair

Kelly Staskey
Secretary