

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 05, 2024

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair VanOrden, Senators Lee, Harris, Bjerke, Zuiderveld, Wintrow, and Taylor

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chair VanOrden** called the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:04 p.m.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT VOTE: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Appointment of Tim Morgan of Boise, Idaho to the Hazardous Waste Facility Siting License Application Review Panel, term Commencing February 23, 2024 and expiring February 23, 2027.**

Senator Wintrow moved to send the gubernatorial appointment of Tim Morgan to the Hazardous Waste Facility Siting License Application Review Panel to the floor with the recommendation that he be confirmed by the Senate. **Senator Bjerke** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT VOTE: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Appointment of Joseph Medeiros of Idaho Falls, Idaho to the Hazardous Waste Facility Siting License Application Review Panel, term Commencing February 23, 2024 and expiring February 23, 2027.**

Senator Taylor moved to send the gubernatorial appointment of Joseph Medeiros to the Hazardous Waste Facility Siting License Application Review Panel to the floor with the recommendation that he be confirmed by the Senate. **Senator Lee** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 527 **PHARMACISTS - Amends, repeals, and adds to existing law to revise provisions regarding the licensure and practice of pharmacy.** Representative Redman stated the bill codified in statute the regulatory reforms pertaining to the Board of Pharmacy. It simply moved rule into statute.

TESTIMONY: **Rob Geddes**, Director of Pharmacy Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, Albertson's, testified in support of **H 527**.

MOTION: **Senator Bjerke** moved to send **H 527** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Zuiderveld** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

S 1379

CONGREGATE CARE - Adds to existing law to establish provisions regarding the placement of a child in congregate care settings. Senator Lee stated that hotel rooms and Airbnbs were originally approved as a temporary emergency congregate care setting. Since that time, the use of these had grown at an extraordinary rate. This legislation gave clear direction to the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) that children should not be housed there for an extraordinary period of time and should not be used for children under 12. She stated the DHW Director must approve the placement of all children residing in such settings for more than two weeks and shall approve the continued placement of the child in such settings at least every two weeks.

TESTIMONY:

Candance Wright; Sheila Weaver; Jennifer Zielinski, Idaho Anti-Trafficking Coalition; and **Christine Tiddens**, Idaho Voices for Children testified in favor of **S 1379**. Living conditions in the Airbnbs was discussed. There were temporary employees that lived in the facilities who were not social workers and were not trained to deal with the issues these children faced.

Senator Bjerke inquired about trauma-informed care. **Ms. Tiddens** explained trauma-informed care was the ability and understanding to care for someone who had been through significant trauma. Trauma-caused behaviors might be seen as aggression, anger, or complete avoidance. People trained to identify these triggers or responses could help a child react appropriately or get them into treatment.

In closing, **Senator Lee** reminded the Committee that the DHW was not bringing this piece of legislation and they had done a child welfare overhaul absent this piece of legislation. She stated the children in Idaho deserved better and this policy change was one step towards that goal.

MOTION:

Senator Wintrow moved to send **S 1379** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Zuiderveld was not aware of the issues at the DHW and fully supported this bill. **Senator Wintrow** thanked Senator Lee for all of her hard work towards resolving the issues related to the foster care system.

VOTE:

The motion passed by **voice vote**.

S 1380

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES - Adds to existing law to establish provisions regarding the Office of Health and Social Services ombudsman. Senator Lee explained this legislation established an Office of Health and Social Services ombudsman. The ombudsman was responsible for monitoring and evaluating the compliance of public agencies and private entities in the provision of health and social services policy for children under the care of the State. The bill outlined the responsibilities of the ombudsman and transferred three full time positions from the Department of Health and Welfare to provide for an ombudsman, a client services analyst, and an executive assistant.

TESTIMONY:

Kylie Billingsley; Brian McCauley; Carolyn Smith; Stacy Pittman, Pittman Law; **Sheila Weaver**; and **Merritt Dublin** testified in favor of **S 1380**. Testimony included their experiences with trying to get grievances resolved.

MOTION:

Senator Harris moved to send **S 1380** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Bjerke** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chair VanOrden** adjourned the meeting at 3:57 p.m.

Senator VanOrden
Chair

Lena Amoah
Secretary