

MINUTES
HOUSE COMMERCE & HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 17, 2014
TIME: 1:30 P.M.
PLACE: Room EW05
MEMBERS: Chairman Hartgen, Vice Chairman Anderson(31), Representative(s) Loertscher, Anderst, Hancey, Harris, Holtzclaw, Mendive, Romrell, VanOrden, King, Woodings
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None
GUESTS: None

Chairman Hartgen called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Hancey** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 13, 2014. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

S 1204: **David Fulkerson**, Department of Human Resources, presented **S 1204**. He explained it makes small changes to Sections 65-505 and 67-5309. Veterans are currently awarded extra points on examinations for state jobs. Points are awarded as whole points, not as percentage points. This bill provides clarification of that process.

Responding to questions, **Mr. Fulkerson** said last year the definition of "veterans" was changed in statute, however this language was not addressed. The top 25 candidates on a register are forwarded to agencies for interviews. Calculations have always been made based on whole points.

MOTION: **Rep. Romrell** made a motion to send **S 1204** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Holtzclaw** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Gloria Totoricagüena, Euskadi-Idaho Trade Agreement Committee, provided an update on Idaho's partnership with the Basque Country. In 2012, **Lieutenant Governor Little** asked her to manage the implementation of the agreement. She said she is a volunteer with a sense of responsibility and considers her work an honor. Culture, education and commerce are the three focus areas of the agreement, however her presentation today focuses on commerce. The Basque Country has similarities to Idaho. In the Basque Country, there are twelve sectorial clusters. The most important for trade considerations are aerospace, automotive, biotech, energy and household appliance manufacturing. All of these are of interest to Idaho businesses and commerce. New technology is important for the Basque Country, which has four technological parks and twenty-four research and innovation excellency centers. The political structure has changed, and peace has brought opportunities for trade and commerce. Spain is divided into seventeen autonomous communities. The Basque Country is one of those with additional powers. They have their own taxing power, meaning they can regulate, collect and manage taxes, including creating tax breaks and making decisions about trade. The Basque Country has the second-highest GDP in the European Union, and has a higher GDP than Idaho. This dispels the myth many believe about this region as a place of farmers and herders, when in fact the Basque Country is a business center. They have the highest level of science and technology graduates in the world, according to United Nations data. University education is free in the Basque Country. New industries deal with gastronomy (culinary arts), wine and the tourism

industry. A potential partnership exists for pairing Idaho's cheeses with historical European winemaker wines.

In response to questions, **Ms. Totoricagüena** said the Spanish unemployment rate includes real divisions in age groups. The rates are lower in the Basque Country where the University is free, the graduation rate is high, and practicums and internships are paid positions. She estimates the unemployment rate at around 10% to 11%. Idaho may have an advantage in the Basque Country because people are aware of it, however many are aware of it as a place their grandparents came to be sheep herders. Education is going both ways to encourage partnerships in business. Free university education is a philosophy in the Basque Region, it is a power reserved for each autonomous region in Spain. There is a cultural belief that tangible things can be taken at any time and are beyond one's control, however education can never be taken. There is a belief that when citizens are well educated, a dictatorship can not come in and wipe out the society. Education is not seen as a singular aspect of life or politics but is woven into and through everything else. Businesses are taxed for ongoing training, senior citizen centers have internet classes, Skype, and other online components. The funding comes from within and is not from Spain or the European Union.

Responding to additional questions, **Ms. Totoricagüena** said the Northern Idaho Aerospace Consortium is building aerospace products, and they need a European foothold to get into the European Union. Also, the outdoor lifestyle has taken hold in the European culture, making rec tech products like backpacks, canoes and other outdoor equipment desirable. Several manufacturers in Idaho are trying to get into the European Union. The wine industry also provides an opportunity for partnerships. Socially, language rights are seen as civil rights because they are tied to identity. For eight centuries women have had the right to own land, choose marital partners and request divorces. Same sex marriage has been legal for approximately twelve to fifteen years. Freedom of religion has been in place for a long time and religious leaders are not allowed to hold office. There are no gun rights. Personal property rights do not exist like they do here in the United States, as the Spanish police can enter and search homes without warrants. There is no death penalty. Ms. Totoricagüena has not met anyone in the private sector world in the Basque Country who has asked about rights in Idaho other than labor rights. The businesses being focused on would provide more knowledge transfer and not as much labor.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Representative Hartgen
Chair

Mary Tipps
Secretary