

MINUTES  
**HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & DEFENSE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 28, 2024

**TIME:** 1:30pm or Upon Adjournment

**PLACE:** Room EW40

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Palmer, Vice Chairman Mitchell, Representatives Dixon(1), Holtzclaw, Monks, Blanksma, Manwaring, Shepherd, Crane (12), Handy, Hill, Lanting, Miller, Petzke, Yamamoto, Gannon, Burns

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Blanksma, Crane (12)

**GUESTS:** The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

**Chairman Palmer** called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Burns** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 20 and 22, 2024 meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**H 640:** **Rep. Holtzclaw**, District 20, stated this legislation establishes a service-only facility, operated by a licensed dealer within the dealer's relevant market area, where the dealer performs any repairs or other services on vehicles, but does not engage in the sales, lease, trade, or display of new or used vehicles. He indicated, the service-only facility shall not be considered a dealer or dealership.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Shepherd** made a motion to send **H 640** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Holtzclaw** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**Chairman Palmer** turned the gavel over to **Vice Chairman Mitchell**.

**H 638:** **Rep. Palmer**, District 20, stated this legislation makes a change to the administrative process with the Strategic Initiatives Grant Program, which was established in 2023. This grant program provides additional money to communities impacted by growth due to state highway and overpass projects that create additional traffic loads on local roads, with 50% of the grant money going to rural projects and 50% going to urban projects. Initially, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) was charged with administering and maintaining the grant program, but with this legislation, that responsibility will be transferred to the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) because they are better set up to manage the program. Additionally, this legislation will require large urban areas receiving grant money to match 20% of any funds received, and any unsuccessful applicants will be required to reapply in order to be considered for future grant opportunities.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Manwaring** made a motion to send **H 638** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Palmer** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**Vice Chairman Mitchell** turned the gavel over to **Chairman Palmer**.

**H 637:**

**Rep. Tanner**, District 14, stated this legislation is an attempt to make Idaho's one countywide highway district, Ada County Highway District (ACHD), a better, more centralized system, and to hopefully set a model for other county highway districts to follow. He explained, after looking at several different ideas, it was decided to move forward with increasing the number of commissioners from five to seven to provide better representation across the county. There are six incorporated cities as well as unincorporated areas within ACHD to factor in when redrawing the boundaries, and with the first attempt to divide ACHD, the county commissioners will take on this task. In the future, it will become the responsibility of ACHD to manage boundaries. He indicated there are specific criteria to follow when drawing the boundaries, including not breaking up any census blocks, precincts, or unincorporated cities, except that the minimum number of precincts or incorporated cities, beginning with the largest cities, may be divided as required to achieve a total population variation of no more than ten percent from the smallest to the largest subdistrict. Rep. Tanner remarked, this ten percent variation is the same requirement used for setting legislative districts.

**Rep. Tanner** explained, the next part of this legislation is the partisan aspect. Looking at other examples of countywide elections, commissioners, coroners, and treasurers are all partisan, so this would align the highway district commissioners with the others to be more consistent. He indicated, in the 2024 election, commissioners representing districts two, four, and six shall be elected for two year terms, and commissioners representing districts one, three, five, and seven shall be elected for four year terms. Thereafter, all districts will be on a four year term cycle. Beginning in 2026, the election would then be conducted as provided by Idaho law relating to holding general elections at the county level, which shall be on a partisan basis. He also discussed salary levels for the highway district commissioners.

In response to committee questions regarding why this change is necessary, **Rep. Tanner** stated this change is to address population growth and to provide better representation across the county. In response to questions regarding the partisan issue, he explained it is to align highway district commissioners to the rest of the countywide elections, which are all partisan. In response to questions regarding ending duly elected commissioners before their terms expire, he remarked when there is change, sometimes there are disruptions, as it is in this situation, with the process to realign the commissioners' terms. He stated, there was never any intent to punish anyone.

**Bonnie Shuster**, self; **Ryan McGoldrick**, Conservation Voters of Idaho; **Kay Hummel**, self; **Cynthia Gibson**, self; **Robert Elliott**, self; **Nina Pienaar**, self; **Gary Parkinson**, self; **Susan Eastlake**, self; **Patrick Spoutz**, self; and **Chris Daily**, self, all testified **in opposition** to **H 637**. They were of the opinion that the legislation brings partisan politics where it doesn't belong, unnecessarily expands and grows government, and unfairly removes commissioners from duly elected positions before their terms are up.

**Alexis Pickering**, President, ACHD, spoke on behalf of the board **in opposition** to **H 637**. She stated they were never consulted, the current board is working well together, has a good working relationship with the cities, unincorporated areas, mayors, and city councils, and does not believe road systems need to be partisan.

**John Evans**, Mayor, Garden City, spoke **in opposition** to **H 637**. He stated he was profoundly disappointed the mayors were never asked to weigh in on this legislation. He remarked, this legislation will not fundamentally change ACHD's operations, but will only create more power and influence by the staff, which will just make it worse. He commented, if the goal is to make ACHD partisan, there are better ways to achieve that goal through proven governance models.

**Rep. Tanner** provided closing remarks. He stated this legislation is to address population growth and to provide better representation across the county by increasing the number of commissioners from five to seven. He said making changes like this does sometimes create disruptions, and this is not punishment to anyone. He concluded by stating because this is the only non political district, that was an issue, and will be corrected by aligning it with other partisan countywide elections. The hope is to create a model other county highway districts can follow.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Hill** made a motion to send **H 637** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Rep. Yamamoto** made a substitute motion to **HOLD H 637** in committee. She stated, if this is such a good idea now, it will still be a good idea next year. This will give time for discussions to take place because it was clear very few, if any, knew this bill was coming.

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Rep. Lanting** requested a roll call vote on the substitute motion to **HOLD H 637** in committee. **Motion failed by a vote of 5 AYE, 10 NAY, and 2 Absent/Excused.** **Voting in favor** of the motion: **Reps. Lanting, Petzke, Yamamoto, Gannon, and Burns.** **Voting in opposition** to the motion: **Chairman Palmer, Reps. Mitchell, Dixon (1), Holtzclaw, Monks, Manwaring, Shepherd, Handy, Hill, and Miller.** **Reps. Blanksma and Crane (12) were Absent/Excused.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION:** **Rep. Burns** requested a roll call vote on the original motion to send **H 637** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by a vote of 10 AYE, 5 NAY, and 2 Absent/Excused.** **Voting in favor** of the motion: **Chairman Palmer, Reps. Mitchell, Dixon (1), Holtzclaw, Monks, Manwaring, Shepherd, Handy, Hill, and Miller.** **Voting in opposition** to the motion: **Reps. Lanting, Petzke, Yamamoto, Gannon, and Burns.** **Rep. Blanksma and Crane (12) were Absent/Excused.** **Rep. Tanner** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:42pm.

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Representative Palmer  
Chair

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Tracey McDonnell  
Secretary