

MINUTES
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & DEFENSE COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 08, 2012

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Palmer, Vice Chairman Ellsworth, Representative(s) Wood(35), Smith(24), Bedke, Wills, Hart, Nonini, Hagedorn, Bateman, Henderson, Nasset, Ringo, King, Killen

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Smith(24), Hart, Killen

GUESTS: Ed Pemble, and Amy Smith, Idaho Transportation Department, (ITD); John Eaton, Idaho Realtors; Bill Miller, Idaho Aviation Association; Katherine Kirk, Idaho Heritage Trust (IHT); William P Statham, Idaho Division of Aeronautics, (IDA)

Chairman Palmer called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

S 1243: **Senator Hammond** presented **S 1243**. This bill is a compromise between those interests who would allow the specialty license plates to grow in number and those who want to eliminate these plates. This bill does not propose to eliminate them. There are three different kinds of license plates: vanity plates, military plates and speciality plates. Four types have been discontinued. Currently \$1.6 million has been raised by the sale of these plates and the money has been given to agencies and organizations with no accountability as to how the funds are dispersed. The purpose of the license plate is to be a unique identifier on each vehicle, assisting law enforcement and traffic management. Having many types of plates, including those for private clubs, dilutes that purpose. Montana, for instance, has twice as many special license plates as Idaho, and it has become hard to read the plates. This bill proposes to leave any and all license plates that are currently issued, but limit future speciality plates to state or other public agencies or foundations supporting the interests of state and/or local government.

In answer to a question about whether Montana uses a template for their license plates, **Senator Hammond** said they do not.

MOTION: **Rep. Wood** made a motion to send **S 1243** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Asked to expand on the issues of limiting license plates, **Senator Hammond** said having a template does help, but Idaho is collecting money and giving it to organizations that do not serve state or local government interests. These agencies or clubs are given money and do not have to account for those funds. Government should not be in the business of raising money for private organizations. In answer to a question about military plates, plates to raise funds for educating low income folks, and other memorial plates, Senator Hammond said those organization would still be able to come forward with new plate proposals. Those are examples of plates being used for a government purpose for the general good of the community. In answer to whether or not organizations with current plates will have to provide annual reports, Senator Hammond said only those new plates going forward will have to report. Senator Hammond said ITD will promulgate rules for future interests; but the Legislature will make the final decision on each plate. Another question was asked about set-up costs as well as on going cost for these plates. Senator Hammond deferred to **Amy Smith** ITD, who said the set up cost is \$3000. The ITD State Highway account gets \$10 or \$13 dollars from the sale of each plate, but there are no ongoing expenses. Some members of the committee argued that limiting the ability to access this voluntary cash for ITD, to the tune of

\$1.6 million, would be imprudent. The system currently in place is self-limiting, if a plate does not draw business, it ceases to exist. Idaho has spent a great deal of money at the prison for this purpose and Idaho does not stock pile plates which has saved storage dollars. The system provides a product at reasonable cost and ITD is the beneficiary.

MOTION: **Representative Bateman** made a substitute motion to **HOLD S 1243** in committee. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

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

RS 21212: **Chairman Palmer** presented **RS 21212** which makes a change to **H 474** which proposes to establish standards for lighting and marking of guyed towers over 50 feet in height. The change adds: "This shall not apply to power poles or structures owned and operated by an electric supplier as defined in Section 61-332A (4). Idaho Code."

Representative Wood made a motion to introduce **RS 21212**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 473: **Representative Jim Guthrie** presented **H 473**. This bill allows for situations when a citizen goes out of state, the driver's license expires, and the driver has to retest if it was expired for 12 months or more. This new provision gives the driver 25 additional months on an expired driver's license before required to take the vision screening and other appropriate tests. The fees are retroactive so ITD does not lose money on the extended time. Identification cards' renewal is mirrored to the license plate changes for consistency. Military persons have 60 days after re-entering the country before surrendering their old ID card to obtain a new one.

When questioned regarding military persons' ability to access the application to renew a license or ID card when deployed out of country, **Rep Guthrie** deferred to **Ed Pemble**, ITD, who said the applications are online and can be accessed for a fee of \$10.

MOTION: **Representative Wills** made the motion to send **H 473** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by a voice vote.** **Rep. Guthrie** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

RS 211812: **Congressman Bill Sali** presented **RS 21182**. This proposed legislation creates a National Motto specialty license plate. There are at least eleven states that have adopted plates with the National Motto "In God We Trust." Most people don't know that this motto is in U.S. Code at 36 USC 302. In Washington DC, Mr. Sali was surrounded by the history of this great nation. He and his wife started the American Heritage Foundation, as a non profit foundation, to provide booklets and other materials on the founding principles of our country, promoting patriotism and good citizenship and respect for positions of authority. Mr. Sali was unable to find another entity providing such materials for free, or at reduced cost. Mr. Sali offered to provide an annual report to the Legislature, giving evidence of how the funds are spent. Mr. Sali mentioned several booklets, including, "The Proper Role of Government" by Ezra Taft Benson and another titled, "American History Stories You Never Read In School....but should have."

The committee asked about the members of the American Heritage Foundation's Board. The committee asked for more information on other entities providing this information at no cost. One committee member felt this foundation was politically motivated.

Representative Hart made a motion to introduce **RS 21181**. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. King** requested that she be recorded as voting **NAY**.

RS 21060: **Representative JoAn Wood** presented **RS 21060**. This legislation comes from ITD and Division of Aeronautics for all of Idaho cities and counties. There are airports that are struggling because of growth in the communities around the airports. The Association of Idaho Cities, The Association of Idaho Counties, Aviation Association, the Division of Aeronautics and the US Department of Aeronautics were brought together to talk about airport zoning. This repeals ITD's authority to establish and administer zoning around public airports and leaves that responsibility to local entities. Idaho has a 64-year-old zoning act that needs to be revised. Rep. Wood has letters from around the State in favor of this legislation, which will be available.

MOTION: **Representative Nonini** made a motion to introduce **RS 21060**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Rep. Ringo asked to have more information about the structure of the organizations who propose license plates and information on how the funds are dispersed to those organizations.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 P.M.

Representative Palmer
Chair

Jane Clark
Secretary