

MINUTES
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Friday, January 31, 2014

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman McKenzie, Senators Davis, Fulcher, Hill, Winder, Lodge, Stennett and Werk

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Senator Siddoway

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: **Chairman McKenzie** called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. with a quorum present. The minutes were held until later in the meeting.

RS 22388 **Relating to Veterans Homes to provide for nonmilitary parents whose child died while serving in the armed forces** presented by Tamara Mackenthun, Veterans Services.

Ms. Mackenthun explained that this legislation will allow Idaho's three state veterans' homes located in Boise, Pocatello and Lewiston, to admit the parents of service members who died while on active duty in the military as residents of those homes. They would pay the full amount required to live in these skilled nursing facilities and would not receive federal Veterans Administration (VA) per diem payments. They would have to be certified by a physician that they require around the clock nursing care. The change would have a very small impact since the estimated increase would only be one half of one percent. **Ms. Mackenthun** requested the support of this legislation.

Senator Werk asked if the addition to the potential population base was in opposition to any federal regulations. **Ms. Mackenthun** answered that the change would put those homes in compliance with federal law.

MOTION: **Senator Werk** moved, seconded by **Senator Stennett**, to send **RS 22388** to print. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Chairman McKenzie welcomed Senator Ward-Engelking to introduce the next item on the agenda. **Senator Ward-Engelking** introduced Ilah Hickman to present **RS 22673**.

RS 22673 **Relating to state symbols to provide that the Idaho Giant Salamander is designated to be the state amphibian** presented by Ilah Hickman, student at Les Bois Junior High School.

Miss Hickman stated she is a seventh grade student at Les Bois Junior High and was asking the Committee's support to designate the Idaho Giant Salamander as Idaho's newest state symbol. Thirty other states have a state reptile or amphibian as a state symbol. **Miss Hickman** explained that the Idaho Giant Salamander is a unique and somewhat shy amphibian; it lives almost exclusively in Idaho (and a sliver of Montana); its skin pattern resembles a topographical map of the Bitterroot Mountain range; and the Idaho Giant Salamander likes to live under rocks near freshwater creeks, rivers and lakes which are plentiful in Idaho.

Miss Hickman provided some history about this project which started when she was in the fourth grade and was just learning about state symbols. In 2012, the

legislator from her district helped her write a bill, in 2013 she testified before the House State Affairs Committee and, although that committee voted to give the bill a full hearing, the session ended before that could happen. Today, she is back for the third time to ask for the Committee's support of this bill.

Senator Davis asked if there are other amphibians that are indigenous to Idaho. **Miss Hickman** said she believed there were, but the Idaho Giant Salamander, being more native and found almost exclusively in Idaho, would be the most unique symbol.

Senator Davis asked what other amphibians resided in Idaho. **Miss Hickman** answered that one was the spaded foot toad which lives in the western part of the United States and there are some others, but the Idaho Giant Salamander would be the most unique.

MOTION: **Senator Davis** moved, seconded by **Senator Stennett**, to send **RS 22673** to print. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 22675 **Relating to the Legislative Council (Council) to provide for the Council to match current practice and policy regarding the selection of co-chairs of the Council** presented by Jeff Youtz, Director, Legislative Services Office.

Mr. Youtz stated that this is a clean up bill regarding how the co-chairmen of the Council are selected. It has been, and is the practice that the President Pro Tempore and the Speaker act as co-chairs. However, when the Council was created in 1963, the language in the code stated that the co-chairmen would be selected from the members of the Council. After Senator Davis pointed out this discrepancy, this bill was drafted to make code match current practice.

MOTION: **Senator Davis** moved, seconded by **Senator Lodge**, to send **RS 22675** to print. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 22629 **Relating to workers' compensation (WC) to provide that compensation shall be payable for disability or death resulting from certain firefighter occupational diseases** presented by Rob Shoplock, Professional Firefighters of Idaho.

Mr. Shoplock explained that this proposal has been in progress over the past five years. Last year, a work group of stakeholders was assembled to create the current bill. Members of the group consisted of WC attorneys, private industry, public service and the chairman of the WC Advisory Board. The resulting draft was presented to the Industrial Commission and their recommendation was to bring it before the Legislature.

Under the proposed change, full time firefighters developing one or more of the diseases listed, will receive WC benefits unless the employer or insurer was able to show a preponderance of evidence that the firefighter was engaged in conduct or activities outside their employment requirements. In looking at the last ten years, one person would have qualified for the WC benefit. **Mr. Shoplock** ask the Committee to consider this bill.

MOTION: **Senator Winder** moved, seconded by **Senator Werk**, to send **RS 22629** to print. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

MINUTES: **Senator Stennett** moved, seconded by **Senator Fulcher**, to approve the minutes of January 20th. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business, **Chairman McKenzie** adjourned the meeting at 8:18 a.m.

Senator McKenzie, Chair

Twyla Melton, Secretary