

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 19, 2015

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Heider, Vice Chairman Martin, Senators Lodge, Nuxoll, Hagedorn, Tippetts, Lee, Schmidt and Lacey

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: **Chairman Heider** called the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

Chairman Heider thanked outgoing page Cameron Floyd for his service and welcomed the Committee's new page, Christopher (Chris) Miller. Mr. Floyd thanked the Committee for its patience and described his plans for the future.

RS 23566C1 **Chairman Heider** asked the Committee for unanimous consent to send **RS 23566C1** to the Judiciary and Rules Committee for printing. He explained the word "surgical" had been added just before the word "abortion" in the Statement of Purpose. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 23655 **Vice Chairman Martin** asked for unanimous consent to send **RS 23655** to the Judiciary and Rules Committee for printing. There were no objections.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Hagedorn** moved to approve the Minutes of January 20, 2015. **Vice Chairman Martin** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**

Vice Chairman Martin moved to approve the Minutes of February 4, 2015. **Senator Hagedorn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT HEARING: **Chairman Heider** welcomed Darrell Kerby to the podium to review his background and answer questions relative to his reappointment to the State Board of Health and Welfare (Board).

Mr. Kerby, from Bonners Ferry, Idaho, summarized his professional background and noted that he has served two terms on the Board. He has also served 28 years as an elected official in other capacities. He said he is a real estate agent and independent insurance agent by profession and continues to monitor the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and its implementation in Idaho.

Senator Tippetts asked if the Board has an impact on how the health exchange contract is administered. **Mr. Kerby** said the Board helps guide and advise only and is kept up to date on the issues.

Chairman Heider noted that Senator Keough will carry the appointment on the floor when the decision is made.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT HEARING:

Mr. Stephen Weeg reviewed his background relative to his reappointment to the State Board of Health and Welfare. Now retired, he has chaired Idaho's health insurance exchange since its inception. He is also on the Health and Welfare Board and the Portneuf Health Care Foundation and Medical Center Boards. His career spans more than 40 years in health and human services, and he has been involved in the Governor's health care summit and select committee on health care. He said he is a Pocatello native and feels he brings a depth of experience to the Board.

Chairman Heider asked for Mr. Weeg's opinion on the successes of Idaho's insurance exchange and the number of insured individuals so far. **Mr. Weeg** said the exchange has made a huge difference to formerly uninsured individuals. Because of the recent cutoff date, he said the number of insured participants is still being tallied.

Vice Chairman Martin asked about the cost of Idaho's health insurance exchange compared with other states. **Mr. Weeg** said Idaho has the lowest number of paid staff of any state-based exchange; development costs are lower than other states.

Senator Nuxoll asked about number of staff. **Mr. Weeg** said there are 14 paid staff. **Senator Schmidt** ask Mr. Weeg to elaborate further on his experience and to state his party affiliation. **Mr. Weeg** restated his experience in more depth and said he is a Democrat.

Senator Hagedorn asked Mr. Weeg's opinion on Health and Welfare Department's biggest obstacles. **Mr. Weeg** said a major obstacle is the dearth of minimum wage jobs which results in the need for more food stamps, Medicaid assistance and other services. He said the answer is a better economy, better education and higher income.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT HEARING:

Dr. Richard Roberge, Caldwell, Idaho, summarized his background relative to his reappointment to the State Board of the Health and Welfare. He explained that this is his fourth nomination to the Board. He is a retired obstetrician.

Senator Schmidt asked about his party affiliation. **Dr. Roberge** said he is an Independent. **Vice Chairman Martin** asked him to expand further on his experience. **Dr. Roberge** elaborated on his background as an obstetrician and reviewed his service on various boards.

Chairman Heider said votes on all three gubernatorial appointments will be held February 23, 2015.

Chairman Heider welcomed former Senator Joyce Broadsword to the podium. **Senator Broadsword** spoke fondly of her years as Senator and her service on the Committee. She said she is now an employee of Idaho's Health and Welfare Department, a position she enjoys very much.

ADJOURNED:

There being no further business, **Chairman Heider** adjourned the meeting at 3:38 p.m.

Senator Heider
Chair

Erin Denker
Secretary

Jeanne' Clayton
Assistant Secretary