

MINUTES
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 19, 2015

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Brackett, Vice Chairman Nonini, Senators Keough, Winder, Hagedorn, Vick, Den Hartog, Buckner-Webb 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 Brackett** called the meeting of the Senate Transportation Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Winder** moved to approve the Minutes of January 27, 2015. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PAGE GRADUATION: **Chairman Brackett** reminded the Committee that Friday marked the end of Paul Kennedy's term as Committee Page. **Chairman Brackett** continued that Mr. Kennedy had been a good addition to the Committee and had been very helpful to Committee members both in Committee and on the Senate floor. He invited Mr. Kennedy to take the podium and share his observations and experience with the Committee.

Mr. Kennedy extended his heartfelt thanks to the Committee. He said he had an unbelievable experience due, in no small part, to the kindness shown him by the Committee members. He said the Committee had been a welcoming and comfortable environment. He particularly thanked the Committee Chairman and the Committee Secretary. **Mr. Kennedy** stood for questions.

Knowing that Mr. Kennedy was planning on attending Vassar College in New York in the fall, **Senator Winder** commented that Vassar had been an all women's college for many years and still maintained a high ratio of women to men students. He asked if that information played a role in making his decision. **Mr. Kennedy** said there was no correct way to answer the question and suggested the Senator use reasoning in determining his motivation. **Senator Buckner-Webb** pointed out that Vassar had been coeducational for the past 45 years.

Senator Hagedorn asked Mr. Kennedy to describe his toughest situation and how he had gotten through it. **Mr. Kennedy** said that his interests include many topics and he had accidentally attended House committee hearings while wearing his Senate red vest. The repercussions weren't too severe. He thought that perhaps the song he performed at the Page graduation on the Senate floor could be considered one of his toughest situations.

Senator Vick asked for his thoughts on wearing the red sweater vest each day. **Mr. Kennedy** said that it was great at first, but after so many weeks it had become like a phantom that follows him. He also thought it was very bright.

Senator Winder reminded him that he had said he would share some of his artwork with the Committee. **Mr. Kennedy** said that as a thank you he had drawn a portrait of each Committee member that he would personally give to each after the meeting. There were no further questions for Mr. Kennedy.

Chairman Brackett again thanked Mr. Kennedy and presented him with a letter of recommendation from the Committee as well as gifts showing the Committee's appreciation for his time and work.

**PAGE
WELCOME:**

Chairman Brackett welcomed the Committee's new Senate Page, Molly Ashby of Meridian. **Chairman Brackett** asked her to take the podium and introduce herself to the Committee.

Ms. Ashby said she was a senior at Rocky Mountain High School in Meridian. She thanked the Committee for the opportunity to work with them and said that she was looking forward to the experience. **Ms. Ashby** said she would enjoy answering any questions.

Senator Den Hartog said she has had an opportunity to get to know Ms. Ashby over the past few years. She asked what Ms. Ashby's interests were. **Ms. Ashby** said she thought being a Senate Page would enhance her interest in both history and government. There were no further questions for Ms. Ashby.

**GUBERNATORIAL
APPOINTMENT:**

Chairman Brackett thanked both Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Ashby for their service to the Legislature. He then welcomed Mr. Jerry Whitehead, Chairman of the Idaho Transportation Board (ITB), and invited him to the podium to introduce Rodger Lee Sorensen of Soda Springs, Idaho who had been reappointed to the Idaho Transportation Department's (ITD) Aeronautics Advisory Board to serve a term commencing on January 31, 2015 and expiring on January 31, 2020.

Mr. Whitehead said he could not say enough good things about Mr. Sorensen. He had been a commercial pilot for 53 years and had travelled throughout the world. He had served as the past chairman of the Caribou County Republican Party. **Mr. Whitehead** said Mr. Sorensen knew about every aspect of aviation and that he wholeheartedly supported Mr. Sorensen's reappointment as the chairman of the Aeronautics Advisory Board.

Chairman Brackett thanked Mr. Whitehead and invited Mr. Sorensen to take the podium. **Mr. Sorensen** thanked the Committee and spoke of how much he enjoyed serving as chairman of the Aeronautics Advisory Board. Born in Grace, Idaho, he was raised on a barley wheat farm where he learned at an early age it was easier to drive a truck than it was to harvest crops. He received his private pilot's license for a single engine plane in 1963. In 1965 he began airline pilot training in Billings, Montana and was hired by Northwest Airlines in 1966. He was assigned to their pilot base in Seattle to fly Boeing 707s both domestically and on international routes to the Far East. During his years at Northwest Airlines, he was contracted through the Military Airlift Command to ferry troops and cargo from military bases on the west coast to the Vietnam War theater of operations. He shared many exciting and interesting stories of his days as a commercial pilot including his flight from Detroit to Tokyo on September 11, 2001.

Mr. Sorensen said that from 1975 until his retirement in 2001 he and his wife lived and raised their five children in Soda Spring, Idaho. He would commute to his pilot bases in Seattle, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Detroit and New York. As captain on Boeing's 727, 747 and 747-400 aircraft he flew varying routes from the United States and Europe to the Central Pacific, Far East and Australia. He began his service on the Idaho Aeronautics Board in 2002 and looks forward to another five-year term. **Mr. Sorensen** stood for questions.

Senator Winder thanked Mr. Sorensen for his service and asked if the Forest Service was cooperating with access to remote airstrips in Idaho. **Mr. Sorensen** said there were differences of opinion on how small aircraft access should be handled, but he was hopeful that a conclusion on the issue would be forthcoming within the next couple of months. There may be a swapping of airstrips for property between the Forest Service and the State of Idaho, but nothing is yet concrete. There were no further questions for Mr. Sorensen.

Chairman Brackett thanked Mr. Sorensen and reminded him that the Committee would vote on his nomination at a future Committee meeting.

TESTIMONY:

Chairman Brackett welcomed Trent Clark, a resident of Soda Springs, friend of Mr. Sorensen and employee of Monsanto based in Soda Springs, to the podium and invited him to offer testimony about this nomination. **Mr. Clark** said that Mr. Sorensen was a pillar in their home community of Soda Springs and a man of impeccable character. He had flown every type of aircraft imaginable and would often invite Mr. Clark to breakfast, surprising him as to where they would end up. **Mr. Clark** urged the Committee to consider all those factors as they vote to confirm the Governor's appointment. **Mr. Clark** stood for questions, but there were none.

S 1083:

Chairman Brackett thanked Mr. Clark and invited Roy Eiguren of Eiguren Fisher Ellis to the podium to present **S 1083**.

Mr. Eiguren said he was representing two charities, Live, Laugh, Love, Give, Inc. and Support Our Troops. Martin Boier, President of both organizations, was in the audience and ready to respond to questions. **Mr. Eiguren** then referred to the handout depicting a colored copy of the America The Beautiful specialty license plate and the Support Our Troops! specialty license plate. **Mr. Eiguren** reminded the Committee that Mr. Boier had relocated the organizations' headquarters office from Florida to Idaho in 2013.

S 1083 provides for the America The Beautiful specialty license plate. Revenue from sales of the plate benefit spouses of those Idahoans serving in the military and provides educational grants for public and private purposes. It even benefits those Idaho members of the military serving outside of Idaho. **Mr. Eiguren** stood for questions.

Senator Den Hartog asked if the America The Beautiful license plate was considered to be a military plate. If so, she wanted to know how it differs from the Support Our Troops! plate, if they were competing for the same funds, and if the revenue would be used for the same purposes. **Mr. Eiguren** deferred to Mr. Boier to answer the question. **Mr. Boier** said they are not duplications. Overhead is always at three percent because of the efficient and shared business practices. As for the most effective use of the funds, he said that efficiency is their standard model.

Senator Keough asked if any of the revenue was used for administrative costs like office space, upkeep, supplies, etc.; did it all go towards helping veterans. **Mr. Boier** said there are always administrative costs involved with business. His organizations pride themselves on keeping their overhead costs at or under three percent. He said that in some cases those costs can amount to as high as 25 percent. He likened a charity's operation to the function of a garden hose: Run as much through it as possible and little will stick to the walls. There were no further questions for Mr. Boier.

TESTIMONY:

Chairman Brackett welcomed Richard Turner, President of the Idaho Youth Challenge Foundation (Foundation), to the podium to testify in favor of **S 1083**. **Mr. Turner** said that Mr. Boier has been a big help to the Foundation in providing emergency assistance to service men and women whose families were left behind in Idaho. It alleviates the stress on those serving abroad. Live, Laugh, Love, Give, Inc. has provided help when needed. He shared the story of the Foundation receiving a generator to keep the lights on and provide heat for the student residents at one of their camps. **Mr. Turner** thanked the Committee and stood for questions.

Senator Hagedorn asked about the capacity of the generator. **Mr. Turner** said it was over 10,000 watts and they had to build a big pad in the City of Pierce to house it.

Senator Hagedorn commented that he had spent some time in the industries section at the prison to learn how license plates are made. The process has evolved over the years. Instead of stacks of pre-pressed plates, now plates can be printed as needed. The process has gotten extremely efficient. Regular license plates cost about \$24 a piece, but specialty license plates bring in much more revenue than that. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is one of three profit centers in the State. Printing specialty license plates is a win-win for the State and the funds to the sponsor flow to places and people with needs.

MOTION:

Senator Hagedorn moved to send **S 1083** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion.

Senator Den Hartog said she did not dispute the good these non-profits do in their communities, but the purpose here seems very broad where other non-profits are very specific as to what they fund. She said she would not support the legislation.

Senator Keough said she echoes Senator Den Hartog's concerns. **Senator Keough** is familiar with the forestry license plate where all of the money raised goes into forest land and none of the funds go to overhead. She said she was uncomfortable with granting a franchise on a taxpayer supported agency.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Chairman Brackett called for a roll call vote. **Chairman Brackett, Vice Chairman Nonini, Senators Winder, Hagedorn, Buckner-Webb and Lacey** voted aye. **Senators Keough, Vick and Den Hartog** voted nay. The motion passed. **Senator Hagedorn** offered to carry the bill on the floor.

S 1084:

Chairman Brackett invited Mr. Eiguren to present **S 1084**. **Mr. Eiguren** said this bill modifies the Support Our Troops! specialty license plate. The money raised supports the military with some charity changes from what the America The Beautiful license plate supports. **Mr. Eiguren** stood for questions.

Senator Hagedorn asked if an annual report was filed. **Mr. Eiguren** said they do and that all specialty license plate sponsors must supply an annual report to ITD. It is available to the Legislature as well. **Senator Hagedorn** asked what comprises their annual report. **Mr. Eiguren** said it includes the distribution of funds and other information the organization deems important. There were no further questions for Mr. Eiguren.

TESTIMONY:

Chairman Brackett invited Mr. Turner to testify in support of **S 1084**. **Mr. Turner** said funds from the Support Our Troops! license plate help support the Idaho Guard and the Reserve Family Support Fund. It helps care for the families of the Idaho troops serving their country. There were no questions for Mr. Turner.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Nonini moved to send **S 1084** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. **Vice Chairman Nonini** offered to carry the bill on the floor.

ADJOURNED: With no further business before the Committee, **Chairman Brackett** adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Senator Brackett
Chair

Gaye Bennett
Secretary