

MINUTES  
**HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 26, 2015

**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW40

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Loertscher, Vice Chairman Batt, Representatives Andrus, Luker, Crane, Palmer, Sims, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, McMillan, Bateman, Cheatham, Nielsen, Smith, Jordan, McCrostie, Wintrow

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**GUESTS:** Rob Shoplock, PFFI; Rev. Nektarios Serfes, self; Wayne Hoffman, Idaho Freedom Foundation; Woody Richards, self.

**Chairman Loertscher** called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

**SJM 101:** **Senator McKenzie** presented **SJM 101**, a joint memorial that urges Congress to support efforts in the Pacific Northwest to combat invasive species and to appropriate money that has been authorized to deal with the issue.

In response to committee questions, **Senator McKenzie** stated there is an ongoing cost to combat these species. He stated "dreissenids" is a term that means a species that damages the water systems.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Smith** made a motion to send **SJM 101** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Anderst** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**RS 23658:** **Rep. Rusche** presented **RS 23658**, proposed legislation that establishes an Inspector General Office within the Governor's Office. Through appointment by the Governor, the Inspector General serves a 6-year term and requires Senate confirmation. He/she may be removed only with Senate concurrence. He stated the Office of the Inspector General will not do prosecution but may refer cases to law enforcement. It is envisioned as a receiver of complaints and concerns, assuring citizens their voices are heard and the Governor's Directors can find out about issues and begin corrective action as early as possible. He said Inspectors General are used by various levels of government to provide an opportunity to investigate concerns about fraud, waste, abuse or malfeasance prior to public court action. He stated that currently concerns and complaints can be made to a supervisor (who may be part of the concern) or to a county prosecutor or to law enforcement for criminal behavior. Idaho's recent history shows that having an entity to do an initial investigation could save the state time, money and help produce a better "product" for our citizens. He stated the fiscal impact would be \$350,000 per year to pay for an Inspector General, two investigators, and one support staff which will come out of the Governor's Office budget.

In response to committee questions, **Rep. Rusche** stated there should be no conflicts with the Governor appointing an Inspector General because there is legislative oversight in the process. He stated the investigation process will be confidential unless malfeasance is found. He stated the Governor's Office was the most common place to put the Inspector General. He stated the Attorney General did not believe it should be a part of his office.

**ORIGINAL MOTION:** **Rep. Wintrow** made a motion to introduce **RS 23658** and spoke to the motion stating a separate office is needed to provide oversight to problems throughout the state.

**Rep. Luker** spoke in support of the motion and stated there is a benefit for a designated place for the public to provide complaints but that the Governor's Office might not be the best place. **Rep. McCrostie** spoke in support of the motion and stated the cost to establish an Inspector General's Office could save the state money in the long run. **Rep. Smith** spoke in support of the motion and stated there needs to be further discussion on the issue.

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:**

**Rep. Palmer** made a substitute motion to return **RS 23658** to the sponsor and spoke to the motion stating the State already has 105 Inspector Generals that are Attorney Generals and we don't need to spend more money. He stated this won't solve any problems because there are plenty of people who investigate and prosecute already.

**Rep. Andrus** spoke in support of the substitute motion and stated that adding an Inspector General's Office creates another level of bureaucracy. He stated the state departments and agencies have the responsibility of oversight already. **Rep. Nielsen** spoke in support of the substitute motion and stated the issue should be discussed further because there could be problems with the Governor accepting federal grants and having the Inspector General in his office.

**VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION:**

**Chairman Loertscher** called for a vote on the substitute motion to return **RS 23658** to the sponsor. Division was requested. **By a show of hands, the motion failed by a vote of 9 NAY, 8 AYE.**

**VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION:**

**Chairman Loertscher** called for a vote on the original motion to introduce **RS 23658**. Division was requested. **Motion carried by a show of hands. Reps. Batt, Andrus, Palmer, McMillan and Cheatham** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**.

**HJM 3:**

**Rep. Erpelding** presented **HJM 3**, a joint memorial to urge the government of Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Eastern Orthodox Church. He stated the Ecumenical Patriarch is the leader of the second largest Christian faith worldwide with approximately 300 million followers. The seat of the church has been centered in Constantinople/Istanbul for the past 2,000 years. He said Christians in Turkey have experienced great persecution which includes the government's interference with the selection of their leader, the closing of their seminary where clergy are trained, confiscation of property, physical violence, and the inability to worship in public.

**Rev. Nektarios Serfes**, spoke in support of **HJM 3** and stated there are very few Christians left in Turkey and there is great prosecution against them. He said the Eastern Orthodox church in Turkey has been heavily taxed for being a Christian church.

**MOTION:**

**Rep. Wintrow** made a motion to send **HJM 3** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Nielsen** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY. Rep. Wintrow** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**H 167:**

**Rep. Harris** presented **H 167**, legislation that requires labor negotiations for public employees be conducted in open session. He said it still reserves the use of executive session to consider labor contract offers, to formulate counter offers, and to discuss sensitive information about a specific employee. Further, it includes a sunset clause to allow evaluation of these changes.

**MOTION:**

**Rep. Sims** made a motion to send **H 167** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Harris** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**RS 23656:** **Roy Eiguren**, Eiguren, Fisher, Ellis, presented **RS 23656**, proposed Memorial that urges the United States Congress to allow the State of Idaho to set vehicle combination weights up to 129,000 pounds from the current 105,500 pounds on the Interstate Highway System in Idaho. He stated the Memorial contains findings that such vehicle combinations have been allowed to operate at 129,000 pounds weight on various portions of the state highway system in Idaho since 2004, resulting in substantial savings of transportation costs without negative impacts to bridges, road surfaces and highway safety. He said Nevada and Utah already allow 129,000 pound combinations and Montana and Wyoming do not have weight limits on the Interstate Highway System in their states.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Nielsen** made a motion to introduce **RS 23656** and recommend it be sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Palmer** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**RS 23547:** **Rep. Bateman** presented **RS 23547**, a proposed Resolution that commends and celebrates Idaho and its people on the state's one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of statehood. He stated that on July 3, 1890, Idaho became the 43rd state and on July 3, 2015, Idaho will celebrate its one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of statehood.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Batt** made a motion to introduce **RS 23547** and recommend it be sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Bateman** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**RS 23698C1:** **Ken McClure**, Givens Pursley, presented **RS 23698C1**, proposed legislation that provides a framework for the operation of Transportation Network Companies in Idaho.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Crane** made a motion to introduce **RS 23698C1.** **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

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Representative Loertscher  
Chair

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Kasey Winder  
Secretary