

MINUTES  
**SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, March 10, 2016

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW54

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Heider, Vice Chairman Nuxoll, Senators Lodge, Hagedorn, Martin, Lee, Harris, Schmidt and Jordan

**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 meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:06 p.m.

**H 523** **Relating to Juvenile Proceedings. Representative Christy Perry** presented this bill.

**Representative Perry** stated that this bill requires the Department of Health and Welfare (Department) to provide the Legislature with an annual report on the status of foster care in Idaho. She reviewed potential subjects that could be addressed in the report. **Representative Perry** indicated that there is no fiscal impact to the General Fund and that the Department has been receptive to the idea.

**Chairman Heider** asked the Committee members if they had any questions.

**Senator Schmidt** asked **Representative Perry** to explain why annual reporting needs to be required in statute when there may not be an ongoing need for future reports. **Representative Perry** answered that because the responsible group within the Department has experienced significant turnover, the decision was made to put the requirement in statute. A sunset clause of approximately five years was discussed, but it was omitted because the statute could be repealed at any time.

**Senator Lodge** asked if this report was going to be in addition to the proposed interim committee and the Office of Performance Evaluations (OPE) report. She noted her concern that this requirement would overburden the Department and take away from the work the Department should be doing. **Representative Perry** responded that discussions about annual reporting began prior to the interim committee and OPE requests. Deputy Director Russ Barron has been supportive of all these proposed ideas. She noted that this does not have to be a long report, but will keep members of germane committees informed regarding foster care in the State. **Senator Lodge** commented that this seems to be too many requests. She asked if this is a good use of money and she commented that there should be a focus on one of these items instead of all three.

**Senator Lee** commented that she appreciates Senator Lodge's position, but she stated that foster care deals with some of the most vulnerable children in the State. She pointed out that this report would provide more attention to the foster care system. She stated that she appreciates the opportunity to review these types of resources and feels awareness would bring more understanding to the Legislature. She asked Representative Perry if this was the intention of this bill. **Representative Perry** answered affirmatively. She commented that the Legislature is able to make better decisions when they have been provided with more relevant information. This would help the Legislature work better with the Department to improve foster care.

**Senator Harris, Senator Hagedorn and Vice Chairman Nuxoll** stated their support for this bill.

**MOTION:**

There being no more questions, **Senator Hagedorn** moved to send **H 523** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Nuxoll** seconded the motion.

**Senator Lodge** indicated that she is not against this bill, but she thinks that the requests for multiple reports is overly burdensome and costly. These reports cost money and Senator Lodge told her constituents that she would be mindful of taxpayer dollars.

The motion carried by **voice vote**. Vice Chairman Nuxoll will carry the bill on the floor of the Senate.

**H 533**

**Relating to Hospital Districts. Jeremy Pisca**, Attorney with Risch-Pisca law firm representing Kootenai Health Medical Center (Kootenai Health), presented this bill.

**Mr. Pisca** stated that this bill gives hospitals, which were formed as part of a taxing district, the ability to add two additional board members. These boards are currently limited by statute to seven elected members. He discussed the growth experienced by Kootenai Health since its formation more than 60 years ago. He noted the difficulty experienced by Kootenai Health in persuading qualified individuals to run for these elected board member positions. **Mr. Pisca** stated that this bill requires a unanimous vote of the elected board members before an additional board member could be appointed. These two appointed members would serve a term that would not exceed six years and could be removed at any time. Further, these appointed members will not be authorized to vote on taxing matters. The intent of this bill is to allow the hospital to find members with specialized knowledge to serve on the board. **Mr. Pisca** indicated that there are seven hospital districts in the State. All seven districts support this legislation. Some districts are uncertain whether or not they would utilize these positions, but appointments are optional.

**Chairman Heider** asked the Committee members if they had any questions.

**Vice Chairman Nuxoll** asked for clarification regarding the support of this bill by the seven hospital districts. **Mr. Pisca** confirmed that the seven hospital districts support this legislation.

**Senator Schmidt** asked how often hospital board positions are in contested elections. **Mr. Pisca** answered that he did not know the answer to that question, but he did not think it occurred very often. **Senator Schmidt** commented that it was his experience that it was usually hard to fill hospital board positions, but that it was refreshing to see yard signs regarding these elections.

Instead of adding board members for expertise, **Chairman Heider** asked if hospital district boards could hire consultants for expertise. **Mr. Pisca** replied that it was more cost effective to make these people board members. Additionally, board members are bound by fiduciary duties whereas consultants are not.

**MOTION:** There being no more questions, **Senator Hagedorn** moved to send **H 533** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Hagedorn will carry the bill on the floor of the Senate.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business, **Chairman Heider** adjourned the meeting at 3:28 p.m.

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Senator Heider  
Chair

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Karen R. Westbrook  
Secretary

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Michael Jeppson  
Assistant