

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 22, 2016

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

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

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Lodge

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 1:02 p.m.

PAGE FAREWELL: **Chairman Heider** recognized and thanked Alaire Chambers for her excellent work as the Committee page for the second half of the 2016 Legislative Session. **Chairman Heider** asked Ms. Chambers to tell the Committee about her experience with the Legislature and her plans for the future. **Ms. Chambers** thanked the Senators for the opportunity to serve as a page. She said she learned a lot about the legislative process and health and welfare issues in Idaho. After graduating, Alaire will be traveling and then has plans to attend college.

HCR 054 **Relating to Behavioral Health Treatment. Representative John Rusche** presented this House concurrent resolution.

Representative Rusche stated that this legislation was drafted based upon a recommendation in the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan Evaluation Report (Report) prepared by the Office of Performance Evaluations. The Report recommended improved communications. The Department of Health and Welfare (Department) and other behavioral health advocates have reviewed this legislation. The legislation provides for a strategic plan for improving behavioral health treatment in Idaho and measures progress over time. **Representative Rusche** commented that this legislation also requires the Department to present a report to the Legislature regarding this strategic plan, including policy recommendations for the Legislature.

TESTIMONY: **Kathie Garrett**, representing the Consortium for Idahoans with Disabilities, testified in support of the House concurrent resolution. She stated that the members of the consortium include: DisAbility Rights Idaho, Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities, Idaho Parents Unlimited, Idaho Federation for Families for Children's Mental Health, National Alliance on Mental Illness - Idaho and many others. **Ms. Garrett** discussed her experience as a behavioral health advocate. She stated that this House concurrent resolution will help to improve behavioral health services in Idaho.

CLOSING REMARKS: **Representative Rusche** stated that it is the Legislature's responsibility to address the issues identified in evaluation reports prepared by the Office of Performance Evaluations. He encouraged the Committee's support for this House concurrent resolution.

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

Referencing the required elements of the Department's report to the Legislature, **Senator Harris** asked if the these requirements would be too burdensome for the Department. **Representative Rusche** responded that the required elements are currently handled by the Department. This report simply provides an organized way to communicate this information to the Legislature.

Senator Martin asked Representative Rusche to confirm that the Department is addressing the issues presented in this resolution. **Representative Rusche** confirmed that they are currently being addressed by the Department, but the Department has not previously reported to the Legislature as requested by this resolution. If the Committee did not approve this resolution, **Senator Martin** asked Representative Rusche if he thought the Department would continue their work and come to the Legislature with recommendations for improvements. **Representative Rusche** stated that he was not sure the Department would provide this specific information in this specific format.

Senator Hagedorn asked how requiring the Department to create a strategic behavioral health plan will change the dynamic of educating Legislators to address behavioral health issues in this State. **Representative Rusche** suggested that previous recommendations from the Department have not provided a complete plan for the Legislature to consider. He said this report will provide a complete plan. Drawing parallels to the Governor's education task force, **Senator Hagedorn** noted that it has taken years for the Legislature to understand the reasoning behind the task force's recommendations.

Senator Hagedorn asked how all Legislators would become educated on the intricacies of a strategic plan for behavioral health prepared by the Department. **Representative Rusche** responded that he thinks the Department does have a behavioral health plan. He believes requiring the Department to report to the Legislature regarding their plan is the best way to educate the Legislature. **Senator Hagedorn** asked why this resolution was necessary if the Department has a plan for improving behavioral health treatment and why isn't the Department articulating their needs to the Legislature. **Representative Rusche** indicated that he did not know why the Department was not reporting this information to the Legislature.

Chairman Heider asked Representative Rusche to address the concern that this resolution inappropriately micromanages the Department. **Representative Rusche** responded that this resolution does not manage the Department, it only requires reporting.

Providing examples of communication issues between (i) the Department and (ii) the Legislature and other agencies, **Senator Schmidt** stated that he was comfortable asking the Department to provide this unified strategic plan.

MOTION:

There being no more questions, **Senator Martin** moved to hold **HCR 054** in Committee. **Senator Hagedorn** seconded the motion.

Senator Hagedorn commented that he believed the Department has a strategic plan for behavioral health in Idaho. He suggested that the actual issue is that the policy makers in the State are not being continuously educated. He stated that the Legislature should not be asking the executive branch set the policy for the State. Setting policy is the Legislature's job. **Senator Hagedorn** suggested that a task force made up of Legislators may be necessary. He reiterated that he cannot support the outsourcing of policy making to the executive branch.

The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**MINUTES
APPROVAL:**

Senator Jordan moved to approve the Minutes of February 8, 2016. **Senator Martin** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Schmidt moved to approve the Minutes of February 9, 2016. **Senator Martin** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Lee moved to approve the Minutes of February 10, 2016. **Senator Martin** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Martin moved to approve the Minutes of February 11, 2016. **Senator Lee** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Martin on written request from Vice Chairman Nuxoll moved to approve the Minutes of February 15, 2016. **Senator Lee** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Harris moved to approve the Minutes of February 16, 2016. **Senator Jordan** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Hagedorn moved to approve the Minutes of February 17, 2016. **Senator Jordan** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Hagedorn moved to approve the Minutes of February 18, 2016. **Senator Martin** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Hagedorn moved to approve the Minutes of March 7, 2016. **Senator Martin** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

INTRODUCTIONS: **Senator Harris** introduced his family in attendance.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business, **Chairman Heider** adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Senator Heider
Chair

Karen R. Westbrook
Secretary