

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 08, 2018

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Heider, Vice Chairman Souza, Senators Martin, Lee, Harris, Agenbroad, Foreman, Potts, 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 Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:03 p.m.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: **Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Suzanne Budge to the Hazardous Waste Facility Siting License Application Review Panel.** **Senator Martin** moved to send the Gubernatorial appointment of Suzanne Budget to the Hazardous Waste Facility Siting License Application Review Panel to the floor with the recommendation that she be confirmed by the Senate. **Vice Chairman Souza** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Harris will carry the appointment on the floor.

HCR 045 **Hearing Devices.** **Representative Rubel** stated health insurers in Idaho do not pay for children's hearing aids, regardless of whether the device is medically necessary. She clarified Medicaid covers hearing aids, but other health insurance does not. Families may be unable to afford hearing aids, which cost between \$5,000 and \$7,000. Lacking necessary hearing aids can be detrimental to a child's development.

Representative Rubel explained this resolution calls upon the Idaho Department of Insurance (DOI) to meet with insurers during the interim and collect data regarding the coverage of hearing aids. Rules contained in Idaho Administrative Code currently do not require insurers to cover the cost of hearing aids. A conflicting administrative rule states insurers must cover congenital conditions.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Souza** expressed interest in this issue.

Senator Potts asked if hearing aids are covered by insurance once individuals meet their deductible. **Representative Rubel** responded in the negative.

TESTIMONY: **Dean Cameron**, Director of the DOI, stated he was willing to work with stakeholders to find a solution to the issue of hearing aid coverage. He stated he did not know of any insurance plan in Idaho which covers hearing aids.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Souza** noted Medicare covers the cost of hearing aids. She stated this does not help individuals who are too young to qualify for Medicare. **Director Cameron** mentioned State health insurance plans (i.e. Medicare and Medicaid) do cover the cost of hearing aids. He explained this may be steering individuals toward State health insurance plans. He expressed support for investigating the issue further.

Senator Jordan noted providing a child a hearing aid can decrease the cost of future services that the child may need if he or she does not have a hearing aid. She asked if the DOI would consider this fact when conducting a cost-benefit analysis. **Director Cameron** responded in the affirmative.

Senator Lee suggested the DOI consider parity between hearing aids and other hearing-related services covered by insurance.

TESTIMONY: **Lisa Coleman** shared her personal experience with this issue and spoke in support of this resolution. She noted hearing aids are not a one-time purchase; they must be repaired and replaced every three to four years. **Ms. Coleman** emphasized the positive impact hearing aids can have upon a child's development.

Kat Ross shared her personal experience with this issue and spoke in support of this resolution.

Kari Baker shared her personal experience with this issue and spoke in support of this resolution.

Michelle Wilson introduced herself as an insurance agent. She shared her personal experience with this issue and spoke in support of this resolution.

Andrea Amestoy shared her personal experience with this issue and spoke in support of this resolution. She noted 22 states currently ensure insurance coverage of hearing aids, and eight more are in the process of doing so.

Gretchen Fores shared her personal experience with this issue and spoke in support of this resolution.

MOTION: There being no more testimony or questions, **Senator Lee** moved to send **HCR 045** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Jordan** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Lee will carry the resolution on the floor.

HCR 043 **Organ Donation, Awareness. Representative Monks** explained the Meridian Mayor's Youth Advisory Council developed this resolution. He stated this resolution encourages Idahoans to become organ donors.

TESTIMONY: **Britton Davis** introduced himself as a member of the Meridian Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. He explained this resolution is meant to celebrate Idaho's rate of organ donation, which is above the national average. The resolution also encourages organ donations.

MOTION: There being no testimony or questions, **Vice Chairman Souza** moved to send **HCR 043** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Martin** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Bayer will carry the resolution on the floor.

H 0546

Anatomical Gifts, Age of Donation. Representative Monks stated the Meridian Mayor's Youth Advisory Council developed this bill. He explained Idaho Code currently requires individuals to be at least 16 years of age to register as an organ donor. Many Idahoans obtain a driver's license at the age of 15 and are unable to register as an organ donor. This bill would lower the age of organ donation eligibility to 15. Parental permission is currently required for minors to become organ donors; **H 0546** would not change this.

TESTIMONY:

Amber Graves introduced herself as a member of the Meridian Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. She stated this bill is meant to create a dialogue between parents and children regarding organ donation. **Ms. Graves** emphasized the importance of organ donation.

MOTION:

There being no more questions or testimony, **Senator Harris** moved to send **H 0546** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Agenbroad** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Senator Potts moved to approve the Minutes of February 14, 2018. **Senator Martin** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Harris moved to approve the Minutes of February 15, 2018. **Senator Jordan** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Martin moved to approve the Minutes of February 27, 2018. **Vice Chairman Souza** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Jordan moved to approve the Minutes of February 28, 2018. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED:

There being no further business, **Chairman Heider** adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Senator Heider
Chair

Rachel Goodman
Secretary