

MINUTES
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 26, 2019

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium

MEMBERS: Chairman Harris, Vice Chairman Armstrong, Representatives Crane, Palmer, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, Monks, Zito, Scott, Andrus, Hartgen, Young, Smith, Gannon, Green(18)

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained with the minutes in the committee secretary's office until the end of the session. Following the end of the session, the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM.

S 1159aa: **Rep. Dixon** presented **S 1159aa**, relating to the ballot initiative process. This legislation would ensure consistency and clarity of the ballot initiative process by requiring a funding source proposal, decreasing the signature collection time frame, increasing the signature requirement, and increasing the legislative district requirement, among making other changes.

In response to committee questions, **Rep. Dixon** answered the purpose of the legislation is to encourage a greater representation of the state, such as rural communities. The emergency clause was included to enact the legislation as soon as possible. In regards to including a funding source proposal, the public will be able to seek guidance from the Department of Financial Management.

Fred Birnbaum, Idaho Freedom Foundation, testified **in support** of **S 1159aa**. He was of the opinion the process needs to be changed because it favors urban areas and encourages big money come from out of state, which can influence the current process.

Bill Brudenell, Gary Moncrief, Dena Duncan, John McCarthy, representing themselves; **Lori Burelle**, National Organization for Women; **Rebecca Schroeder**, Executive Director, Reclaim Idaho; testified **in opposition** to **S 1159aa**. They were of the opinion, the legislation would make it impossible to get grassroots initiatives on the ballot, restricts the public's constitutional rights, and will prompt expensive litigation to ensue. It was also stated the signature timeline would disadvantage rural communities as opposed to helping them because people living in rural areas would have to travel further to collect the required amount of signatures, in a shorter time frame.

Russ Hendericks, Idaho Farm Bureau, testified **in support** of **S 1159aa**. He was of the opinion the initiative process needs to be modernized and the 6 month deadline would give ample time to those needing to collect signatures.

Colin Nash, Karen Lansing, Don Shaff, Don Kemper, representing themselves, testified **in opposition** to **S 1159aa**. They were of the opinion the combination of the three main requirements of the legislation would make Idaho's initiative process one of the strictest in the country.

Benjamin Kelly, Food Producers of Idaho, testified **in support** of **S 1159aa**. He was of the opinion, the legislation would support rural communities because the current system creates inequity between urban and rural areas. He stated the 6 month time frame should give initiative organizers ample time to collect signatures.

John Segar, Roberta Damico, Jim Jones, representing themselves; **Kathy Griesmeyer**, Policy Director, ACLU; **Mark Bussolini, Nancy Harris**, representing themselves; **Priscilla Giddings**, Representative, District 7; **Vic Miller, Adam Olsen, Alicia Abbott**, representing themselves; **Mistie Tolman**, Planned Parenthood; **Lori Ode, Matt Denning, Scott McDougall, Tracy Olson, Sylvia Chariton, Diane McConnaughey**, representing themselves, testified **in opposition** to **S 1159aa**. They were of the opinion, the legislation restricts rural communities, grants veto power to a small amount of legislative districts and could be considered unconstitutional. There is also an unfair expectation and burden placed on the public to draft a funding source since the legislature has the help of the Legislative Services Office.

Chairman Harris called a recess of the committee and announced the meeting would reconvene at 1:00 PM in EW40.

Representative Harris
Chair

Julia Grief
Secretary