

MINUTES  
**SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, August 24, 2020

**TIME:** 12:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Lodge, Vice Chairman Harris, Senators Hill, Winder, Vick, Anthon, Souza, and Stennett

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Buckner-Webb

**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:** **Chairwoman Lodge** called the Senate State Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 12:25 p.m.

**S 1001** **RELATING TO ABSENTEE VOTING DURING THE PANDEMIC** to revise provisions of issuance and counting absentee ballots.

**PRESENTATION:** **Phil McGrane**, Ada County Clerk and Chair of Elections Committee for Association of Counties and Clerks, reported that **S 1001** would affect the November election only, provide that local ballots be mailed 30 days prior to the election, and allow county clerks an additional two weeks to open and scan ballots. **S 1001** would not affect overseas or military ballots or counties that read ballots by hand. He added that **S 1001** would provide that ballots would not be tabulated until polls closed and that ballots be stored securely.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Anthon** asked if there were known prosecutions related to secure voting. **Secretary of State Lawrence Denney** responded that there were no known prosecutions related to tampering of votes. **Senator Stennett** asked if a mail delay would affect processing of ballots and if sorting machines were working. **Secretary Denney** replied that a delay was unlikely and that machines were operating as usual. **Senator Vick** asked if each county created its own policy for counting ballots. **Secretary Denney** responded that counties submit plans and that the Secretary of State's Office provided directives.

**TESTIMONY:** **Chris Yamamoto**, Canyon County Clerk, expressed support for in-person, early, and absentee voting and opposed 100% mail out. He reported on Canyon County's process to ensure secure voting, which included cameras and utilizing You Tube for viewers to watch the process. **Senator Souza** asked if smaller counties could install similar cameras. **Mr. Yamamoto** responded that the system was relatively easy and inexpensive.

**Jennifer Locke**, Chief Deputy Clerk, Kootenai County, supported **S 1001** and the absentee voting process. She reported that Kootenai County used a camera and security system for ballots.

**Rosa Martinez**, Ada County, reported that a thousand people had signed up and were available to work the polls and suggested advertising through the media how easy it was to sign up. **Chairwoman Lodge** responded that that was not the case throughout Idaho and that advertisements were done. **Ms. Martinez** added that some overseas and military votes were not counted because ballots were not received in time. **Senator Vick** asked the clerks how many poll worker requests were received. **Mr. McGrane** reported 200 applications in Ada County, **Mr. Yamamoto** reported 23 applications in Canyon County, and **Ms. Locke** reported 70 applications in Kootenai County.

**Jill Watts**, Nampa, reported that she had signed up to volunteer, but had not heard back. She supported in-person voting and that anything less was not part of the Constitution. She added that several friends had signed up to vote by mail, but never received ballots. **Mr. Yamamoto** responded that no issues were reported with the company responsible for mailing out ballots. He added that an issue was reported regarding people who share a last name; however, he was confident the issue had been rectified.

**Catherine Tedeski**, Nampa, expressed support for in-person voting and that mail-in voting would encourage fraud. She recommending using CARES money to eliminate fraud. **Senator Souza** assured that **S 1001** would not preclude anyone from the right to vote in person and that it allowed people to securely vote absentee and only for this year.

**Senator Stennett** asked for assurance that the primary all mail-in voting was not fraudulent. **Secretary Denney** confirmed that security measures were taken. **Senator Stennett** asked if those measures made it unlikely for someone to vote twice. **Secretary Denney** confirmed that measures were taken to prevent duplicate votes. **Senator Souza** noted the difference between absentee and mail-in voting. **Chairwoman Lodge** confirmed that **S 1001** would not affect in-person voting, but would encourage it.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Souza** moved to send **S 1001** to the 14th Order for possible amendment. **Senator Vick** seconded the motion. **Senator Souza** recommended language to clarify types of security measures, basic generalities, and chain of custody. **Senator Vick** shared concern with security and would support **S 1001** with that change. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**S 1002**

**RELATING TO IN-PERSON POLLING LOCATIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC** to propose alternative procedures for election day voting and provide vote centers.

**PRESENTATION:**

**Phil McGrane**, Ada County Clerk and Chair of Elections Committee for Association of Counties and Clerks, reported that **S 1002** would allow people to vote at any polling location, would provide clerks with the ability to adjust and adapt as needed, and that voting centers would add security and convenience. **Mr. McGrane** showed an example of an e-poll book, which provide increased security by scanning voters' identification and prevents voter fraud.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Harris** asked if bugs were worked out of e-poll books. **Mr. McGrane** confirmed that bugs were worked out and that paper poll books were still available if a problem arose. **Senator Anthony** asked if there was anything that would limit Idahoans from voting. **Mr. McGrane** responded no and that **S 1002** provides voters the flexibility to vote at any location. **Senator Stennett** asked if **S 1002** included mail-in provisions. **Mr. McGrane** responded that **S 1002** would not allow county clerks to do an all mail in election and that it was specific to the November election. **Senator Stennett** asked what would happen if a polling place was closed and moved beyond 25 miles. **Mr. McGrane** responded that **S 1002** allowed county clerks to adjust and adapt and allow voters with options in the event of an emergency.

**TESTIMONY:** **Robert Jones**, Nampa, expressed distrust in technology and public officials and was afraid of vote tampering. He asked why **S 1002** was presented in the special session and asked the committee to consider if it was the right to run the bill. **Mr. Jones** stated that changing things would confuse the situation, especially older people. **Chairwoman Lodge** responded that **S 1002** would not change processes but would make sure people had the flexibility and ability to vote. She added that voters would be notified of location changes. **Mr. Jones** expressed concern with the possibility of multiple votes by people with common names. **Mr. McGrane** responded that voters' addresses would be verified to assure that the right person voted.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Stennett** asked if the current language relating to early voting was similar to **S 1002** concerning voting centers, and if duplicate votes was possible. **Chad Houck**, Chief Deputy Secretary of State responded that the format was similar, and gave examples of how voting centers operated around the State. **Senator Stennett** asked how the public was informed of voting locations. **Mr. Houck** replied that a communication plan was prepared using CARES Act funds and that information would be sent to all registered voters' households. **Senator Souza** clarified the difference between in-person early voting and a voting center. **Mr. Houck** agreed and added that different statutes provided for early voting, early absentee, and in-person absentee voting, and that counties would choose the type of voting. **Senator Stennett** asked if there were limitations in early voting and asked for an update of activity around the State. **Mr. McGrane** responded that discussions were spread out and that early voting would be available throughout the State.

**MOTION:** **Senator Harris** moved to send **S 1002** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Anthon** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**, **Senator Stennett** voted nay.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Anthon** moved to approve the minutes of August 24, 2020 at 10:30 a.m. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**COMMENTS:** **Senator Winder** thanked the committee for its efforts in making sure that people have the ability to exercise their right to vote. **Chairwoman Lodge** also commended the elected officials for their work.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairwoman Lodge** adjourned the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

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Senator Lodge  
Chair

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Gaye Bennett  
Secretary