

MINUTES
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, August 26, 2020

TIME: 12:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

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

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senators Anthon and 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 12:35 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Harris** moved to approve the Minutes of August 24, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. **Senator Hill** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice** vote.

H 1 **RELATING TO IN-PERSON VOTING** to provide for the right of certain electors to vote in-person.

PRESENTATION: **Representative Giddings** reported that **H 1** amends Idaho Code 34-1006 by adding language to allow voters opportunity to vote in-person regardless of state emergencies. **H 1** would not affect smaller precincts of less than 140 voters. **Representative Giddings** stated that the fiscal note was unknown because of future uncertainties, but hoped cost would not be too much to outweigh a person's ability to vote.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Souza** noted that the smaller precincts would still have to request an absentee ballot and clarified that it would not be a universal mail in voting. **Senator Stennett** asked what statute currently guides in-person voting and if **H 1** adds clarity or is redundant. **Representative Giddings** responded that **H 1** was not redundant but added extreme state emergency language. She noted that the Governor's proclamation suspended Idaho Code sections dealing with in-person voting so that absentee voting could be done. **Senator Stennett** asked how in-person voting would be done in cases of flooding, as an example. **Representative Gidding** responded that there would still be the option to move voting locations if an emergency was in a county and if the emergency affected the state perhaps the election could be delayed. **Senator Stennett** asked if it was possible to move the date of a federal election. **Representative Giddings** did not know and would need to yield to the Secretary of State's Office for an answer. **Senator Souza** clarified that **H 1** would not require voters to vote in-person, but would provide the opportunity to vote in-person; absentee ballots could still be requested.

TESTIMONY: **Charity Majors** stated that she was wife of a first responder, a mother, and supported in-person voting. She noted the 100 year anniversary of women's right to vote had just been celebrated, and that it was an honor to vote in-person. She said precautions would be taken to stand in line and vote, and that she and other moms were happy to fulfill the duty of staffing polling stations.

Nikki Shumacher stated that she was a humble Christian, homemaker, and mother who has lived in Idaho for 30 years and supported voting in-person. She stated that through her YouTube channel, she had a firm grasp on the voice of Idahoans who supported in-person voting.

Camille Harris, Rexburg, supported **H 1** and stated that many people felt loneliness and despair and that many, especially older people, felt that they did not have a voice if not able to vote in-person. **Ms. Harris** stated that people were concerned with becoming ill, but more concerned with the right to vote.

Nancy Georgeson, Boise, supported **H 1** and stated that her grandmother taught her the importance of voting and when her grandmother was no longer able to vote in person, she and her husband requested an absentee ballot. **Ms. Georgeson** stated that she wanted the same rights for her kids.

MOTION: **Senator Souza** moved to send **H 1** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice** vote.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairwoman Lodge** adjourned the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

Senator Lodge
Chair

Gaye Bennett
Secretary