

MINUTES
HOUSE COMMERCE & HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 03, 2021

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW05

MEMBERS: Chairman Holtzclaw, Vice Chairman Syme, Representatives Harris, Kingsley, Christensen, Giddings, Wisniewski, Horman, Hanks, von Ehlinger, Weber, Chew, Necochea, Toone

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Necochea

GUESTS: Don Drum, PERSI; Rick Allen, ICOPA; Sheriff Kieran Donahue, Idaho Sheriff's Assoc; Cory Stambaugh; Mark Estess, ICOPA; Casey Baker, EAI; Margie Baker, EAI; Holly Rebholtz, IPAA; John Evans, AIC; Rob Shoplock PFFI; S. Jay Theiler, Agri Beef

Chairman Holtzclaw called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

MOTION: **Rep. Toone** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2021 and February 25, 2021 meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 28557: **Rep. Troy** presented **RS 28557** stating it would consolidate all existing code relating to Home Owners Associations (HOA) into a single condensed chapter. It also has language which addresses legislative intent, acknowledges the rapid growth of the state, and clarifies the definition of property rights. Additionally there is new language in this proposed legislation which clarifies how and when notice of an HOA meeting must be given. Other languages is in regards to fees, solar panels, political signs, flags and other issues which have come before the legislation.

In response to Committee questions **Rep. Troy** reiterated the only new language in this legislation is in regards to the legislative intent and notice of an HOA meeting.

MOTION: **Rep. Harris** made a motion to introduce **RS 28557**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

HR 3: **Rep. Chew** presented **HR 3** to the Committee stating it would commemorate the good relations between Taiwan and Idaho. She stated the official name of Taiwan is the Republic of China (Taiwan) and clarified the difference between it and the People's Republic of China which is mainland China. She spoke of her experiences as young child learning about her heritage, as well as the values which are shared between Idaho and Taiwan. She stated Taiwan is also a democratic republic and values freedom in the same way as the US. She went into detail about the robust trade between Taiwan and Idaho, stating it is one of the largest trade partners with the state in agricultural products like wheat and beef as well as technology. She also spoke about Taiwan's participation in global diplomacy projects and the World Health Organization. She stated Taiwan and Idaho have been sister states for 37 years and praised Taiwan for the donation of ten thousand face masks to Idaho when the state was facing a personal protective equipment shortage in 2020.

Jay Theiler, Vice President of Marketing and Strategy, Agri Beef, spoke in support of **HR 3**. He listed the amount of cattle and beef produced by their partners and stated Taiwan is one of the strongest trade partners the company has. Idaho exports around twenty-two million dollars worth of beef overseas to Taiwan and Taiwan is the second largest trade partner with Idaho in regards to beef. He also noted some recent policy changes in Taiwan which have reduced regulation and increased the trade in beef. This increased trade has led to an increase in sales for Idaho ranchers and beef producers. He stated Idaho has never wavered in their support of Taiwan and this legislation affirms their support.

Casey Baker and **Margie Baker** both testified in opposition to **HR 3**. They were concerned by the involvement of foreign powers in the state's agricultural production. They stated Idaho farmers should be allowed to trade where and how they wish, but a trade relationship with China should not be codified.

MOTION: **Rep. von Ehlinger** made a motion to send **HR 3** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Rep. von Ehlinger spoke to his motion and offered a further clarification between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. **Rep. Wisniewski** made a statement about his personal experiences while traveling to Taiwan as well as the close ties and shared values between Idaho and Taiwan.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Chew** will sponsor the resolution on the floor.

Chairman Holtzclaw turned the gavel over to **Vice Chairman Syme** at 2:04 PM.

S 1096: **Rep. Holtzclaw** presented **S 1096** stating it provides a new clarification of what constitutes a "catastrophic on the job injury" for police officers and fire fighters. He defined these injuries as those which lead to a permanent disability. He also listed inability to hold necessary certifications and medical approval by the retirement board as the qualifications for eligibility to receive the benefits outlined in this legislation. Examples of these types of injury are permanent loss of use in ears, eyes, limbs or other similarly serious injury. He stated the people covered by this bill risk life and limb and should be supported when they do lose life or limb. Finally he stated there will be no fiscal impact to the general fund as the firefighters and police departments are going to self fund the benefits outlined in this legislation. **Rep. Holtzclaw** introduced **Chief Rick Allen**, ICOPA, to give more detail on **S 1096**.

Chief Allen stated he has been a police officer for 27 years and at the beginning of his career he had the impression he and his family would be cared for if the worst should happen while he was on the job. He stated during his career he has seen at least seven first responders go to work one day only to have their entire lives changed by a catastrophic injury. He cited examples of cities which were able to keep these first responders on the payroll as well as examples of first responders who have yet to receive any compensation, disability benefits, or a disability hearing even years after their injuries. He stated this bill would allow these first responders to receive a sustainable compensation and give them a secure future. He reiterated this effort would be entirely self funded and stated the police and firefighters would just like the opportunity to take care of their own.

In response to Committee questions about current practices, **Chief Allen** explained after a serious injury occurs, immediate medical expenses are covered then a hearing is held to determine and rate the level of disability experienced by the injured party. He further explained the disability hearings can be held up for long amounts of time, citing a specific case where the disability hearing has been held up for years.

MOTION: **Rep. Christensen** made a motion to send **S 1096** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Sheriff Kieran Donahue, Idaho Sheriffs Association; **Brian Lovell**, President of FOP; **John Evans**, IAC; **Rob Shoplock**, firefighters; **Don Drum**, PERSI, testified **in support** of **S 1096**. They stated this legislation will allow police officers and firefighters who are catastrophically injured a chance to regain some independence as well as providing financial security. They stated under current statute if a disabled person who is receiving PERSI benefits finds new employment in a different field they will lose their disability status, effectively penalizing them for attempting to find some normalcy and purpose in life. They stated the importance of feeling self worth for the people affected by this legislation. They expressed the likelihood this legislation would even reduce workers compensation rates for police officers and firefighters and stated there has been nothing but overwhelming support from all interested parties. They each asked the Committee to support them in their efforts to take care of their own.

In response to Committee questions **Sheriff Donahue** stated narrow scope of the legislation was intentional, as they did not want to cause any confusion about the difference between a catastrophic injury and one which can be rehabilitated and is recoverable. He also clarified the language regarding working, stating the definition of a catastrophic injury is one which will bar the recipient from returning to their previous duties. However if recipients want to do something different such as public speaking they should be allowed to do so without losing their benefits.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Holtzclaw** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 2:34 PM.

Representative Holtzclaw
Chair

Emma Wall
Secretary