

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Thursday, April 08, 2021
- TIME:** 1:30 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Crabtree, Senators Den Hartog, Woodward, Lent, Johnson, Cook, Ward-Engelking, and Nelson
- 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 Thayn** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 1:32 p.m.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Johnson** moved to approve the Minutes of March 9, 2021. **Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- H 298** **Relating to Student Immunizations; Amends Existing Law to Provide That School Officials Shall Provide Parents and Guardians With Certain Information in Communications Regarding Student Immunizations. Senator Den Hartog and Representative Gayann DeMordaunt** outlined the bill for the Committee. Representative DeMordaunt also passed out supporting documentation to the members of the Committee (see Attachment 1).
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if page 1 of the handout, from Attachment 1, was actually used by a school district in Idaho. **Representative DeMordaunt** said yes, and the letter was sent to her home last fall.
- TESTIMONY:** **Steven Keyser; Stephanie Hughes; Casey Baker; and Marge Baker**, residents of Boise, Idaho, testified in support of **H 298**. They said many Idaho parents do not know of the vaccine exemption policy currently in place, and that "opting-out", is an option.
- Elizabeth Carson**, from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; and **Lynn Frison**, from Hayden, Idaho, sent in written testimony in support of **H 298** (see Attachment 2). They said parents need to know of the exemption process.
- Bradley Bigford**, nurse practitioner in Boise, Idaho, testified in opposition to **H 298**. **Mr. Bigford** said he worried that children who do not receive vaccines will cause outbreaks of measles, mumps, and other common childhood diseases. He also cautioned that not immunizing all students will affect students who are immune compromised, such as students with cancer, who cannot receive vaccine's. Those students must rely on their classmates being vaccinated for them to be in a classroom at all.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** read the current vaccine exemption form parents can sign if they do not want their children to receive vaccines of any kind. **Senator Nelson** asked if the email exchange presented in Attachment 1 was complete or was there a further exchange between Representative DeMordaunt and the school. **Representative DeMordaunt** said the email exchange was six to seven emails in total between herself and the school, and **H 298** resulted from that exchange and from research in talking with other parents from around the State.

Senator Cook asked if it was true that all parents have to sign a vaccine exemption form if they wish to opt out of having their children vaccinated. **Representative DeMordaunt** said that was correct, and the form must be on file with the school.

MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **H 298** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Cook** seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Thayn** said **H 298** gives parents the responsibility for vaccinating their children, and he will support the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: **Chairman Thayn** asked for a roll call vote on the motion. **Senators Den Hartog, Woodward, Lent, Cook,** and **Ward-Engelking** voted aye. **Senators Johnson** and **Nelson** voted nay. The motion carried.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 1:58 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Florence Lince
Secretary