

MINUTES
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 09, 2022
TIME: 9:00 A.M.
PLACE: Room EW40
MEMBERS: Chairman Crane, Vice Chairman Armstrong, Representatives Palmer, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, Monks, Scott, Andrus, Young, Furniss, Hanks, Skaug, Gannon, Mathias
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representatives Furniss, Armstrong
GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session, the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Crane called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

H 531: **Rep. Okuniewicz** presented **H 531** which seeks to provide safeguards against any attempt to delete U.S. history by stipulating the Idaho Historical Society must review and approve any significant moderation or removal of a historical monument or memorial. It would not include any temporary alterations for repair, nor would it mean a memorial or monument could not be relocated to a similarly zoned location. It would apply only to permanent removal or re-naming, and for permanent relocation of an historical memorial or monument to a less visible location than its original one. In response to committee questions, Rep. Okuniewicz explained the Idaho Historical Society board members are appointed by the Governor, and their governing decisions are based on a two-thirds majority vote requirement. The two-thirds vote was chosen instead of simple majority vote due to the permanent outcome of decisions made by the board.

MOTION: **Rep. Skaug** made a motion to send **H 531** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Okuniewicz** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 514: **Rep. Hanks** presented **H 514** which seeks to remove any mask mandate issued by state government entities.

Those speaking **in support** of **H 514** were **Dr. Lynn Laird**, a practicing psychologist in Meridian, Idaho and **Lorna Mitson**, citizen. Dr. Laird said she is seeing daily evidence the normal social development of children across all ages is being negatively impacted by not being able to see people's faces and expressions. Ms. Mitson testified the mask mandates have been divisive and harmful. The exemptions granted have been inconsistent and people are being harassed and abused when they aren't wearing a mask regardless of the reason. Her daughter is experiencing isolation at her university and mask mandates are negatively impacting her ability to find a job.

Speaking **in opposition** to **H 514** was **Stephanie Mickelsen** from Mickelsen Farms. She said this bill would prohibit local government from enacting laws based on the needs of their area and it would additionally prohibit people from protecting themselves in the event of future epidemics that could be worse than COVID-19.

Rep. Hanks was called upon for closing remarks and committee questions. The need for children's proper development outweighs the need for government mandates at this time. She re-iterated this legislation does not prohibit anyone from wearing a mask. If people were experiencing life threatening symptoms en masse that masks could prevent, they would wear masks but this has not been what Idaho is experiencing. Everyone is responsible for their own health and should have the freedom to make decisions accordingly. There were no stipulated consequences addressed in this bill if it were to be enacted and not followed by state entities.

MOTION: **Rep. Barbieri** made a motion to send **H 514** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Hanks** will sponsor the bill on the floor. **Reps. Gannon** and **Mathias** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**.

RS 29450: **Rep. Young** presented **RS 29450** which seeks to enact legislation that builds on the principles already in law. It specifies when a person requests a religious exemption from a medical treatment or process, it must be honored and respected consistent with the standard expected of all religious freedoms.

MOTION: **Rep. Scott** made a motion to introduce **RS 29450**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

DOCKET NO. 38-0000-2100: **Steven Bailey**, Deputy Director of the Idaho Department of Administration (IDA) presented **Docket No. 38-0000-2100**, which establishes how the interior and exterior of state property is managed, use of the Chinden office complex, and rules concerning the division of purchasing. No changes have been introduced from the previous year. In response to extensive committee questions about the current protests taking place at the old courthouse complex next to the State Capitol building, Mr. Bailey stated the protestors are in compliance with the rules set forth by the IDA. They are working closely with Idaho State Police to monitor continued compliance. There are no rules stipulating how long protests may be held, only the matter in which they are conducted. He clarified while camping would be a violation of the rules, the protestors were not camping; the tents in place are symbols to provide visual demonstration. He also stated to the best of his knowledge, there were not signs posted on state properties prohibiting weapons on the premises.

Keith Reynolds, Director of the Idaho Department of Administration (IDA) was introduced by **Mr. Bailey** to address additional committee questions. Mr. Reynolds stated there were defined guidelines in place on what methods or materials can be used in demonstrations or protests although not every possible imagined scenario was stipulated. Animals nor vehicles are allowed on state grounds for purposes of demonstrations and there are guidelines protestors must adhere to so as not to disrupt business of the State or neighboring private businesses. He stated the goal of the IDA is to ensure best efforts are made to address situations as they arise to ensure the people are safe, the buildings are safe, free speech is protected and honored, and to remain free from intimidating the people.

MOTION: **Rep. Skaug** made a motion to approve **Docket No. 30-0000-2100**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

DOCKET NO. 38-0000-2100F: **Steven Bailey**, Deputy Director of the Idaho Department of Administration presented **Docket No. 38-0000-2100F** which are the rules stipulating the fees associated with parking in and around state property. He stated there were no changes to the fee rules since last year.

MOTION: **Rep. Gannon** made a motion to approve **Docket No. 38-0000-2100F**. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Reps. Crane** and **Holtzclaw** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**.

DOCKET NO. 15-0600-2100: **Lt. Col. Lauren Tschampl** presented **Docket No. 15-0600-2100** which has no changes since last year. In response to committee questions, Lt. Col. Tschampl said this docket is not related to vaccine requirements for the Idaho National Guard. It pertains solely to the Public Safety Communications Commission and the Hazardous Substance Response Department.

MOTION: **Rep. Andrus** made a motion to approve **Docket No. 15-0600-2100**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:54 a.m.

Representative Crane
Chair

Rebecca Fisk
Secretary