

MINUTES
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, January 24, 2024

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Crane(13), Vice Chairman Young, Representatives Palmer, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, Scott, Andrus, Skaug, Alfieri, Allgood, Crane(12), Gannon, Nash (Coberly)

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

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 (13) called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

H 390: **Rep. Skaug** presented **H 390** explaining this legislation expands the Attorney General's authority to investigate city elected officials in addition to county elected officials. He further explained he has received no opposition to the bill.

Jeff Nye testified in support of **H 390** explaining this legislation does not give the Attorney General's office jurisdiction over open meeting law violations of city or county elected officials. He further highlighted one of the options the Attorney General's office has in this legislation is not to charge a case but to instead suggest training to remedy the situation. In response to committee questions he stated this legislation is important now because it means something to people to have officials investigated when they have lost trust in those same officials.

MOTION: **Rep. Alfieri** made a motion to send **H 390** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Reps. Gannon and Coberly** requested they be recorded as voting **NAY. Rep. Skaug** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 415: **Rep. Hill** presented **H 415** explaining the best option for reducing violence in schools is onsite armed security, but this would cost \$120 million. Additionally, volunteer security can be inconsistent. Therefore, this legislation seeks to fill the gap by allowing teachers and staff to be armed in order to cover the time between an event occurring and when law enforcement arrives. If school staff wish to carry a firearm, they must have completed an enhanced concealed weapons course, they must inform the principle and superintendent, and the weapon must be concealed. There will be a confidential list kept of who on campus is carrying a firearm and a copy of the licenses of those people will be kept with the list. This legislation does not require school staff to carry firearms, but protects their right to do so, should they so choose. This legislation further states school staff who choose to carry a firearm will not be held civilly or criminally liable for deciding to engage or not to engage during a shooting. Furthermore, this legislation requires the removal of 'gun free zone' signs from schools with a fine for failure to comply. Removal of those signs is the key deterrent component of this bill.

In response to committee questions, **Rep. Hill** explained this legislation says principals can inform the school board which school staff are carrying firearms, but they are not required to do so. The list of staff who carry firearms shall remain confidential so it is not punitive. Rep. Hill offered Grangeville as an example of a school district which has enacted this policy and is having great success. He explained police and sheriffs are staying neutral regarding this legislation, but parents are asking for this kind of legislation. There is always push back to legislation of this nature, but this is a necessary action.

Rep. Hill referred further committee questions to **Aoibheann Cline**, NRA, who explained this legislation only applies to lawful carry of firearms which does not include anyone who is drunk or impaired. She further explained this legislation asks staff who carry to notify School Resource Officers themselves because they have an existing relationship, while the principle or superintendent will be in charge of notifying the larger net of local law enforcement. She also clarified for the committee the definition of volunteer in the legislation which only includes volunteers who are under contract with a school.

Tara Adams testified in opposition to **H 415** telling the committee she and her husband were survivors of the Las Vegas mass shooting and cannot imagine the additional chaos of that event if attendees were allowed to carry firearms. She stated they are responsible gun owners but feel this would increase the number of injuries and fatalities. More firearms is not the answer.

Scott Brock testified in opposition to **H 415** explaining he owns a business that offers armed security to schools in a way that removes the risk of liability from the schools. He stated the enhanced carry training is the lowest common denominator when it comes to what should be required in this bill. In response to committee questions, he explained this legislation does not stop him from operating his business and he feels many school districts will not change their policy due to this legislation.

Quinn Perry, Idaho School Board Association testified in opposition to **H 415** stating this legislation undermines the roll of the school board as the government closest to the people. He stated further how this legislation is impractical to implement and voiced concerns about it including volunteers. He addressed the earlier example of Grangeville highlighting they require their staff to take active shooter training before they could carry firearms in school and more than half the staff dropped out.

Julie Davis and **Diana David** testified in opposition to **H 415** explaining concerns this legislation does not have deterrence for shooters and guns are falling into the hands of unqualified people and being purchasing online.

Paul Stark, Idaho Education Association testified in opposition to **H 415** highlighting no educators, administrators, or school boards are asking for it. He expressed it is the statutory responsibility of the school board to protect students and there is no requirement in this legislation to inform the school board. He stated as this bill is written, parents would not have power to express their concern with or support of firearms in their child's classroom

Lynne Schneider and **Andrea Wilson** testified in opposition to **H 415** emphasizing that individual school districts should have the ability to determine their own unique policies for their schools.

Robert Gillis, Idaho Tough on Crime, testified in support of **H 415** telling his story as a first responder in a school shooting. He stated school boards are not protecting kids and something drastic must be done to protect them.

Aoibheann Cline, NRA, testified in support of **H 415** explaining this bill is about the minutes before law enforcement arrives at a school shooting. She further said many people carry lawfully in this state every day, and this legislation lets others know Idaho students are protected. In response to committee questions, she clarified a survey of parents or school administrators about this legislation was not done.

Rep. Hill closed the presentation of **H 415** stating concerns and fear around this legislation are unfounded and he asked for focus on the objective of protecting children.

MOTION: **Rep. Young** made a motion to send **H 415** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Rep. Gannon** made a substitute motion to **HOLD H 415** for time certain, until Monday January 29th.

Speaking to his substitute motion, **Rep. Gannon** stated concern the public had not had enough time to view the legislation.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Substitute motion failed by a vote of 2 AYE and 11 NAY. Voting in favor of the motion: Reps. Gannon and Coberly. Voting in opposition to the motion: Reps. Crane (13), Young, Palmer, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, Scott, Andrus, Skaug, Alfieri, Allgood, and Crane (12).**

ROLL CALL VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION: **Original motion carried by a vote of 11 AYE and 2 NAY. Voting in favor of the motion: Reps. Crane (13), Young, Palmer, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, Scott, Andrus, Skaug, Alfieri, Allgood, and Crane (12). Voting in opposition to the motion: Reps. Gannon and Coberly. Rep. Hill will sponsor the bill on the floor.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Representative Crane (13)
Chair

Kennedy Jones
Secretary