

MINUTES  
**HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & DEFENSE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, March 18, 2024

**TIME:** 1:30pm or Upon Adjournment

**PLACE:** Room EW40

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Palmer, Vice Chairman Mitchell, Representatives Dixon(1), Holtzclaw, Monks, Blanksma, Manwaring, Shepherd, Crane (Crane)(12), Handy, Hill, Lanting, Miller, Petzke, Yamamoto, Gannon, Burns

**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 Palmer** called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

**S 1252:** **Rep. Hill**, District 14, stated how much he loves the National Guard and his comments are not directed at any individual in attendance today. He remarked, without a congressional declaration of war as outlined in Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, the Idaho National Guard should not be deployed into active duty combat, except in the instances of an invasion or insurrection. He continued, there hasn't been a declaration of war since 1941, and since that time, there has been a deviation to that practice sending National Guards from one war to the next. He stated the Idaho National Guard's mission is to be in the state so when the Governor needs his militia, they will be available. He believes World War III is coming and our National Guard needs to be prepared, equipped, and ready.

Speaking **in opposition** to **S 1252**; **Leslie Wolf**, 32-year Idaho National Guard member, self; **Lehi Hartwell**, self; **Bradley Stock**, self; **Chris Brasley**, self; **Lee Pierce**, representing Idaho National Guard Enlisted Association; **Christian Duplessie**, representing Idaho National Guard Officers Association; **Richard Turner**, Retired Brigadier General, self; **Tim Donnellan**, Commander, Idaho National Guard, representing the Adjutant General and the 5,000 Idaho National Guardsmen; and **Matt Smith**, representing Professional Firefighters. They were of the opinion Idaho National Guard's primary purpose is to serve as combat reserves. If **S 1252** passes, the majority of the National Guard funding, which is provided by the federal government to recruit, train, and equip the Guard will be at extreme risk of being taken from Idaho, which would greatly impact combat readiness and the ability to assist with national defense.

Speaking **in support** of **S 1252**; **Joe Evans**, self; **Nicolas Gatejen**, self; **Dan McKnight**, self; **James Kroenke**, self; **Ryan Spoon**, self; and **Kent Burns**, self. They were of the opinion a congressional declaration of war must be declared before any National Guard units are deployed overseas in active duty combat. This hasn't happened since 1941. **S 1252** is an attempt to realign and correct the balance of power between the Executive and Legislative Branches of the federal government. This will end the Executive Branch's ability to send National Guard troops to endless wars without congressional oversight or accountability.

**Rep. Hill** yielded the podium to **Senator Adams** for closing remarks. Senator Adams defended **S 1252** stating it will not get in the way of the Idaho National Guard going overseas for training, just a hard "no" for overseas combat. He indicated this is federalism, how the founding fathers established a way for states to challenge the federal government. Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the ability to declare war, and not using it should be challenged. He continued, the founding fathers separated the war powers from the Executive Branch, and the oath is to the U.S. Constitution, not to the Department of Defense. He stated Congress would not defund the Idaho National Guard.

**Rep. Hill** commented, he only wants the Idaho National Guard to be equipped, trained, and ready for the next war, which he believes will be World War III.

**Chairman Palmer** announced **S 1252** was properly before the committee.

After a lengthy silence, **Rep. Dixon (1)** stated this is a very difficult topic, but is one that needs to be addressed. He remarked, the primacy of the U.S. Constitution is important, and understands the fears of what might happen, but a decision is necessary.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Dixon (1)** made a motion to send **S 1252** to the floor **WITHOUT** recommendation.

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Rep. Crane (12)** made a substitute motion to **HOLD S 1252** in committee.

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Chairman Palmer** requested a roll call vote on **S 1252**. **Substitute motion carried by a vote of 12 AYES, 4 NAYS, and 1 Absent/Excused. Voting in favor of the motion: Chairman Palmer, Reps. Mitchell, Holtzclaw, Monks, Blanksma, Crane (12), Handy, Lanting, Petzke, Yamamoto, Gannon, and Burns. Voting in opposition to the motion: Reps. Dixon (1), Shepherd, Hill, and Miller. Rep. Manwaring was Absent/Excused.**

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:36pm.

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Representative Palmer  
Chair

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Tracey McDonnell  
Secretary