

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, January 27, 2025

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair VanOrden, Vice Chairman Bjerke, Senators Harris, Zuiderveld, Lenney, Shippy, Blaylock, Keyser, and Wintrow

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: **Chair VanOrden** convened the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:02 p.m. She welcomed the Future Farmers of America students in the audience and thanked them for attending the Capitol to witness government proceedings.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Bjerke** moved to approve the Minutes of January 20, 2025. **Senator Wintrow** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

DOCKET NO. 58-0108-2401 **Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems - Pending Rule.** **Chair VanOrden** called for a motion to accept this rule. **Senator Blaylock** moved to approve **Docket No. 58-0108-2401**. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 31856 **Relating to Health Board Responsibilities.** **Senator Lenney** presented this legislation as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This increased restrictions on public health districts to avoid government overreach and affirmed that all actions must be backed by scientific research.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Wintrow** inquired about Senator Lenney's process consulting with district health boards to understand the implications of revising State law. She also asked for clarification on how the boards would decide what constitutes "broad and arbitrary" rules. **Senator Lenney** replied it would be more appropriate to engage with these questions during the full hearing, but added that current statute allows the district health boards to do "all things," and this legislation added accountability and regulations.

MOTION: **Senator Harris** moved to send **RS 31856** to print. **Senator Shippy** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of B.J. Stinger to the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired** (Commission), term commencing July 1, 2024 and expiring July 1, 2027. **Mr. Stinger** discussed how his grandfather worked with the Commission in the late 1960s. As such, participation with the Commission was part of his family legacy. He received a masters in social work in 2023 and had dedicated his life to helping others.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Wintrow** asked Mr. Stinger about the responsibilities of the Commission and his personal qualifications and skills. **Mr. Stinger** explained the Commission met once a quarter to hear reports, aid with decision-making policy, and oversee administration. **Senator Wintrow** invited Mr. Stinger to educate the Committee on working with people that have visual impairments. **Mr. Stinger** invited them to say hello in public. If Committee members saw someone with visual impairments struggling at the grocery store, **Mr. Stinger** humorously reminded them not to use the phrase "over there" in giving directions.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Appointment of Trevor Sparrow of Pierce, Idaho as the Office of Health and Social Services Ombudsman**, term commencing December 9, 2024. **Mr. Sparrow** explained his background as a parole officer and in private investigations encouraged him to invest more attention in youth services. This led him to serve as the director of the Youth Challenge Academy, where he focused on creating effective models for youth support. As the Health and Social Services Ombudsman, **Mr. Sparrow** would ensure safety and respect, and work to enhance the State's child welfare system. He emphasized his gratitude for the opportunity to serve in this newly created position.

DISCUSSION: **Senator VanOrden** thanked Mr. Sparrow for his contributions to the Idaho Youth Challenge Academy. She attended the meaningful graduation of a constituent and was very impressed by the Academy's work.

Senator Wintrow invited Mr. Sparrow to stay connected with the Department of Health and Welfare Citizen Review Panel and welcomed collaboration with Mr. Sparrow on recommendations for statutory reform. **Mr. Sparrow** emphasized the importance of a credible, impartial investigative process. He echoed the importance of collaborating with the Citizen Review Panels, particularly to address regional issues such as the impact on foster care of high rates of female incarceration.

GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Elizabeth Elroy of Meridian, Idaho, to the Board of Environmental Quality**, term commencing July 1, 2024 and expiring July 1, 2028. **Ms. Elroy** received a masters in environmental engineering and had over 20 years of experience at Micron. Her current position was the Vice President of Global Environmental Safety, Health, and Sustainability. She emphasized balancing environmental protection with business success and her commitment to preserve Idaho's natural environment for future generations.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Harris** invited Ms. Elroy to share two or three successes from her tenure on the Board of Environmental Quality. **Ms. Elroy** highlighted the way the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) retained high caliber talent with a broad variety of experience. This provided stability to navigate complicated environmental issues and the diverse expertise to address technical issues. **Senator Harris** asked Ms. Elroy for a specific goal to accomplish during the next four years. **Ms. Elroy** stated her biggest goal was to continue protecting the environment while also balancing business prosperity. At Micron she saw success in implementing solutions that reduced impact on the environment, while simultaneously saving operational costs.

Senator Shippy inquired about Ms. Elroy's perspective on agricultural threats to the environment and the dangers of cloud seeding. **Ms. Elroy** relayed she was not an expert on agriculture or cloud seeding, but highlighted her priority lied in protecting land to cultivate crops in a socially responsible manner. While she had heard conversations of cloud seeding relating to inversions, she would need to do more research.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chair VanOrden** adjourned the meeting at 3:42 p.m.

Senator VanOrden
Chair

Rebecca Kozlowski
Secretary