

MINUTES  
**SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, January 30, 2025

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW54

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair VanOrden, Senators Harris, Zuiderveld, Lenney, Shippy, Blaylock, Keyser, and Wintrow

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Vice Chairman Bjerke

**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 3:01 p.m.

**GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT:** **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Allan Schneider to the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired** (Commission), term commencing July 1, 2024 and expiring July 1, 2027. **Mr. Schneider** confessed he was initially reluctant to receive help for his vision loss. Once he realized that his impairment prevented him attending the Boise Balloon Festival with his grandchildren, he decided to seek assistance from the Commission. **Mr. Schneider** served on the Commission for ten years and most recently as the Chair.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Harris** asked Mr. Schneider the biggest things he learned during his time as Chairman. **Mr. Schneider** explained that during COVID, Commission workers spent hours personally calling individuals in their care to mitigate the isolation of the pandemic. From this he learned to trust the workers on the ground.

**Senator VanOrden** thanked Mr. Schneider for having the courage years ago to receive help and join the Commission. **Mr. Schneider** responded that though it was hard to admit to needing help, growing up his mother would say, "If you don't participate, how can we have a community?"

**NOTE:** Senator VanOrden amended the agenda to present **S 1024** before the proceeding with the next gubernatorial reappointment.

**PASS THE GAVEL:** Chair VanOrden passed the gavel to Senator Harris.

**S 1024** **MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES - Amends, repeals, and adds to existing law regarding adult and children's mental health services and substance use disorder services. Senator VanOrden** stated this bill moved previously accepted rules governing the Department of Health and Welfare (Department) to Idaho Code. The Pro Tempore was in agreement that turning rules to statute was in the Department's best interest.

**MOTION:** **Senator Blaylock** moved to send **S 1024** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Lenney** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PASS THE GAVEL:** Senator Harris passed the gavel to Chair VanOrden.

**GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT:** **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Dr. Timothy Rarick to the State Board of Health and Welfare** (Board), term commencing January 1, 2025 and expiring January 1, 2029. **Dr. Rarick** introduced he was a professor researching the impact of family on community stability. His work took him to presentations across the world, including to the United Nations. He currently served as the Chair of the Board and appreciated all he learned.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Lenney** inquired whether Dr. Rarick felt an advisory board to the Department was necessary. **Dr. Rarick** agreed that the Board's situation was unique, but so long as members understood their role, he believed it was helpful.

**Senator Harris** asked what Dr. Rarick learned during the COVID pandemic. **Dr. Rarick** replied to hear all sides before making informed decision.

**Senator Zuiderveld** invited him to briefly discuss his time at the United Nations. **Dr. Rarick** had attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women for the past ten years to address the effect of fatherlessness on children. He encouraged nations to adopt language that prioritized the family unit.

**Chair VanOrden** thanked **Dr. Rarick** for empowering women and girls through discussing fatherhood and for presenting to the Committee.

**S 1014** **HEALTH AND SAFETY - Amends, repeals, and adds to existing law to establish procedures regarding required tests and blood specimen collection for infants and newborns.** **Senator Blaylock** stated this bill moved existing rules on newborn screening into Idaho Code. This ensured that elected officials had primary oversight.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Wintrow** asked if Senator Blaylock saw any potential drawbacks for moving rules to code. **Senator Blaylock** saw zero negatives since rules as enforced carried the same weight as laws. She furthered that once a rule demonstrated longevity, it should be moved to statute.

**TESTIMONY:** **Jennifer Beazer**, a nurse working with newborn screening, voiced her support for this bill because it eased the regulatory burden of treating patients.

**MOTION:** **Senator Harris** moved to send **S 1014** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Wintrow** seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Wintrow** voiced general concern about legislative overreach and her preference for broad laws that allowed the executive branch implementation flexibility. In this specific instance, she thought the bill would benefit the Department.

**VOTE:** The motion to send **S 1014** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation carried by **voice vote**.

**S 1015** **HOSPITALS - Amends, repeals, and adds to existing law to revise and establish provisions regarding the licensure and inspection of hospitals.** **Senator Blaylock** discussed this bill reduced unnecessary burdens on hospitals and providers of Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). She remarked that removing current state level requirement would lessen operational strain on hospitals and providers.

- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Shippy** inquired how this would affect hospitals that were not CMS certified or preferred not to comply with federal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion standards. **Laura Stute**, Division of Licensing and Certification, stated that the difference between licensing and certification of hospitals only varied in billing. As such, this would not affect the licensing of non-CMS hospitals if they remained compliant in other aspects.
- TESTIMONY:** **Brian Whitlock**, President of Idaho Hospital Association, thanked Senator Blaylock and the Department for a bill that eliminated conflict between federal and state statutes.
- John Schokins**, licensed nursing home administrator, explained detailed ways federal and state statutes often contradicted one another in nursing homes.
- MOTION:** **Senator Harris** moved to send **S 1015** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Wintrow** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Lenney** asserted he would like a post-mortem of **S 1015** in one year to know if they accidentally struck a crucial element from the rules.
- VOTE:** The motion to send **S 1015** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation carried by **voice vote**.
- ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chair VanOrden** adjourned the Committee meeting at 3:59 p.m.

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Senator VanOrden  
Chair

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Rebecca Kozlowski  
Secretary