

MINUTES  
**SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 04, 2025

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

**PLACE:** Room WW54

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair VanOrden, Vice Chairman Bjerke, Senators Harris, Zuiderveld, Coho (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** called the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Blaylock** moved to approve the Minutes of January 27, 2025. **Senator Bjerke** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Shippy** moved to approve the Minutes of January 28, 2025. **Acting Senator Coho** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 32140** **Relating to the Idaho Safe Haven Act.** **Senator Nichols** relayed this legislation amended the Idaho Safe Haven Act to place abandoned babies directly with vetted adoptive families. It required custody to be transferred to the Department of Health and Welfare within 24 hours and included provisions for notifying tribes under the Indian Child Welfare Act.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Harris** asked about the current process for handling Indian babies who have been abandoned. **Senator Nichols** responded they entered the foster care system. **Senator Wintrow** requested more information about baby boxes throughout Idaho. She asked if the legislation addressed the legal process for parents who reconsidered abandoning their child. **Senator Nichols** would present this information during the bill hearing.

**MOTION:** **Senator Keyser** moved that **RS 32140** be sent to print. **Senator Zuiderveld** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 32224** **Relating to Stating Findings of the Legislature.** **Senator Nichols** presented a resolution reaffirming Idaho's commitment to ethical medical and scientific research. It recognized the Nuremberg Code as a framework for protecting human rights, particularly the right to voluntary consent. The resolution encouraged Idaho's research institutions to adhere to these standards.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Wintrow** asked what prompted writing this resolution. **Senator Nichols** stated she had a presentation for a later date that explained the background. **Senator Harris** noted that since the legislation was a resolution, he recommended the Committee move to send **RS 32224** to print. On the Senate floor they would then ask unanimous consent to bring it back to the Committee for Senator Nichols' presentation.

**MOTION:** **Senator Keyser** moved that **RS 32224** be sent to print. **Senator Zuiderveld** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**S 1035**                    **CONGREGATE CARE - Amends existing law to revise provisions regarding the placement of a child in congregate care settings and to provide for regular review of placements.** **Senator Wintrow** discussed this bill amended 2024 Senate Bill 1379. It required the Department of Health and Welfare (Department) to review foster child placement in congregate care every 14 days for short-term unlicensed facilities and every 90 days for licensed facilities. This bill ensured the Department placed foster children in appropriate settings.

**DISCUSSION:**            **Senator Zuiderveld** asked if reviewing placement every 14 days strained Department staffing. **Senator Wintrow** concurred that the bill added work to top Department employees. She explained that the Department felt this was an appropriate use of their resources and did not anticipate hiring more staff.

**TESTIMONY:**            **Craig Anderson**, owner and operator of Hinge Point Youth Homes, assisted in revising the language of **S 1035**. He appreciated the decrease in regulatory burdens.  
**Brittany Shipley** of Hailey, Idaho, supported this bill for addressing the needs of vulnerable youth.

**MOTION:**                **Senator Blaylock** moved to send **S 1035** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Bjerke** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT VOTE:**            **Senator Shippy** moved to send the Gubernatorial appointment of **Mark Watkins** to the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired to the Senate floor with the recommendation that he be confirmed. **Senator Wintrow** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION:**        **Maternal Mortality Report.** **Orin Duffin**, Programs Director of Health Professions, Division of Professional and Occupational Licensing (DOPL), presented the findings of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC) reestablished by 2024 House Bill 399. The MMRC report outlined 13 cases of maternal death in Idaho and emphasized that mental health challenges and hemorrhage were the most common causes of pregnancy-related deaths in 2023. **Mr. Duffin** relayed recommendations such as patient education and improving access to pre- and postpartum care.

**DISCUSSION:**            **Senator Shippy** noted some religious groups' refusal of medical care could contribute to the mortality rate. **Senator Shippy** asked if MMRC found instances where doctors' withholding care related to the maternal mortality. **Mr. Duffin** replied MMRC found no evidence of denial of care.

**Senator Wintrow** requested details surrounding MMRC hiring and committee composition along with information about the specific cases relating to death by suicide and hemorrhaging. **Mr. Duffin** affirmed that DOPL posted recruitment notices at the end of June 2024 and the Idaho Board of Medicine screened candidates. On page five, the report listed members. **Mr. Duffin** continued that while two of three suicide deaths directly related to pregnancy, the third was pregnancy associated. He would consult a provider to discuss the hemorrhaging case with Senator Wintrow. MMRC found no evidence that there was a delay in care. **Senator Wintrow** noted her confusion that the report recommended increased screening for hemorrhages.

**Senator Blaylock** appreciated the data-driven approach of the report and wondered how Idaho's maternal mortality compared to the national and state averages. **Mr. Duffin** responded it was difficult to obtain such information since the United States did not have a standardized maternal mortality reporting method. **Senator Wintrow** respectfully countered that language in the report reflected subtle politically motivated language, even if that was not MMRC's intent.

**Senator Bjerke** invited Mr. Duffin to share the importance of apolitical reports. **Mr. Duffin** replied the report demonstrated MMRC's unbiased, data-driven approach.

**ADJOURNED:**

There being no further business at this time, **Chair VanOrden** adjourned the meeting at 3:56 p.m.

---

Senator VanOrden  
Chair

---

Rebecca Kozlowski  
Secretary