

MINUTES  
**SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 13, 2025

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

**PLACE:** Room WW54

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

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Lenney

**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:** **Vice Chair Bjerke** called to order the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) at 3:01 p.m.

**PRESENTATION:** **Honoring the Page- Abigail Williams. Ms. Williams** thanked the Senators, including her sponsor Senator Harris, for this opportunity to deepen her understanding of the legislative process. She mentioned her practice of tracking the number of "ums" spoken by presenters and noted that overall the Committee heard 2,125 "ums."

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Harris** thanked Ms. Williams for her cheerful attitude and asked what surprised her most about the Senate. **Ms. Williams** responded she expected to feel intimidated by the Senators, but realized they were kind, real people trying to make a difference.

**Senator Zuiderveld** remarked that Ms. Williams lightened the burden of being on a sometimes heavy Committee and asked about her future plans. **Ms. Williams** replied she would graduate high school in May, showing a steer and pole vaulting before attending college in the fall.

**Senator Bjerke** and **Senator Shippy** noted their appreciation for all of Ms. Williams' contributions to the Senate.

**S 1102 IDAHO RESIDENTIAL CARE OR ASSISTED LIVING ACT - Amends, repeals, and adds to existing law to revise provisions regarding the Idaho Residential Care or Assisted Living Act. Senator Blaylock** described this bill served three main functions. The bill:

1. Simplified the process for opening and expanding residential care and assisted livings by altering the licensing and safety inspection process.
2. Limited operational burdens by allowing administrators to oversee three buildings as opposed to only one. Further, it outlined a delegation process for administrators and altered care timelines by removing outdated regulations.
3. Fostered partnership between providers and the Department of Health and Welfare (Department) by eliminating spontaneous inspections and removing financial incentives to issue fines.

Overall, **Senator Blaylock** anticipated these changes would ease the strain on administrators and the residential care industry as Idaho approached an increasingly aging population.

- PASSED THE GAVEL:** Vice Chair Bjerke passed the gavel to Chair VanOrden.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Harris** thanked Senator Blaylock for this bill and noted his time on the Bear Lake Memorial Hospital Board revealed the clear need for reform. **Senator Wintrow** asked for a detailed breakdown of the changes in **S 1102**.
- TESTIMONY:** **Robert Vander Merwe**, nursing home administrator, outlined page-by-page changes made by the bill.
- Angela Hilleshaim**, registered nurse and licensed administrator, discussed clinical changes to the bill. It updated antiquated and contradictory rules which were not in harmony with current advancements in medicine and patient care.
- MOTION:** **Senator Harris** moved to send **S 1102** to the Senate Floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Wintrow** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- PRESENTATION:** **Department of Health and Welfare Budget. Alex Williamson**, Budget and Policy Analyst, Legislative Services Office, presented a summary of the last five years of Department spending, along with the forecasted budget for 2026 (Attachment 1 & 2). This included an explanation of Medicaid-driven costs, the Governor's child welfare initiative, and internal Department reorganization.
- ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chair VanOrden** adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

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Senator VanOrden  
Chair

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Rebecca Kozlowski  
Secretary