

MINUTES
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 26, 2025

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Crane(13), Vice Chairman Scott, Representatives Palmer, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, Skaug, Alfieri, Crane(12), Boyle, Dygert, Hostetler, Mickelsen, Pohanka, Achilles, Green

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Green

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 Crane (13) called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Chairman Crane (13) turned the gavel over to **Vice Chairman Scott**.

Vice Chairman Scott commented the Lottery and Secretary of State rules would be heard on Friday, February 28, 2025.

MOTION: **Rep. Dygert** made a motion to approve the minutes for February 24, 2025. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**UNANIMOUS
CONSENT
REQUEST:** **Vice Chairman Scott** asked unanimous consent to re-organized the agenda. There being no objection, consent was granted.

RS 32463: **Rep. Crane (12)** presented **RS 32463** which states only eligible citizens may vote in the United States of America and the Secretary of State must strive to maintain the accuracy and integrity of Idaho's statewide registration system, ensure that only eligible Idaho voters are registered to vote in Idaho, and cooperate with other government entities to prevent and fight against voter fraud in the United States. This proposed legislation requires the Secretary of State to request information from agencies and government entities to carry out the intent of the legislature.

MOTION: **Rep. Mickelsen** made a motion to introduce **RS 32463**.

A committee members asked a question around federal voter databases included in the proposed legislation.

Rep. Holtzclaw declared rule 80 stating a possible conflict of interest but would be voting on the proposed legislation.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:** **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**UNANIMOUS
CONSENT
REQUEST:** **Vice Chairman Scott** asked for unanimous consent to move **H 301** to be heard next. There being no objection, consent was granted.

H 301: **Rep. Raybould** presented **H 301** which updates the State Procurement Act. Emergency provisions are provided for budget requests that come in after the budget deadline and clarification of multiple award contracts to two or more bidders.

A committee member asked a question around this affecting contracts going forward or contracts already in place.

MOTION: **Rep. Mickelsen** made a motion to send **H 301** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Raybould** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST: **Vice Chairman Scott** asked for unanimous consent to move **H 253** to be heard next. There being no objection, consent was granted.

H 253: **Rep. Furniss** presented **H 253** which allows state and local governments additional time to respond to requests for public records from nonresidents and to allow a different fee schedule to fulfill nonresident fee requests. The fee schedule for nonresident record requests would be allowed to be commensurate with actual costs of the agency from start to finish of request fulfillment.

MOTION: **Rep. Mickelsen** made a motion to send **H 253** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

A committee member asked if the press was aware of this legislation.

Bob Naerebout, Idaho Dairyman Association; spoke **in support** of **H 253**.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Furniss** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST: **Vice Chairman Scott** asked for unanimous consent to move **RS 32283** next on the calendar to be heard. There being no objection, consent was granted.

RS 32283: **Rep. Cayler** presented **RS 32283**. This bill ensures that public funds and resources are no longer used to support media entities, cutting off all direct and indirect financial support from federal, state, and local governments. Student media from K-12 schools and public higher education institutions are exempt. The No Public Funds for Public Media Organizations Act, eliminates the use of taxpayer dollars to fund public media organizations in Idaho, including those affiliated with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, PBS, and NPR as they have faced widespread criticism for biased reporting and promoting one-sided narratives, making it clear that funding such organizations is not a proper role of government.

Committee members had questions regarding Idaho Legislature's Public Broadcasting in the proposed legislation and where it is stated within the bill, government service stations, examples of bias in public television in Idaho, author of the bill, out of state media broadcast transmission, total budget for public television, and maintaining the system without funding. Other concerns were the affects of taking from the budget the Emergency Broadcast System and public television, broadcasting for free, and the direct conflicts around no resources for media organization.

MOTION: **Rep. Mickelsen** made a motion to return **RS 32283** to sponsor.

Chairman Crane (13) asked questions around the analysis of the fiscal note and the 12 million dollar budget. Other committee members commented on slash funding for public television, broadcast licenses, illegal actions, Boise State Radio, and the proposed legislation needs more thought before moving forward.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 139: **Rep. Alfieri** presented **H 139** which sets specific requirements for the use of absentee ballots. The original intent of the absentee was to provide access to voters who were physically unable to vote for reasons beyond their control: physical infirmity, illness, work restrictions, and the like. Broadening the use of absentee ballots opens Idaho up to potential voter fraud. This legislation addresses those issues by eliminating no-excuse absentee ballots, while preserving the rights of those unable to vote in person because of reasons beyond their control.

Committee members had questions around restricting the absentee process, other opportunities for voters, ballots thrown in dumpsters, stats of Idaho population, support of county clerks, security issues to be solved, how specific groups are chosen, and the process of the justification and challenges around the absentee ballot.

MOTION: **Rep. Hostetler** made a motion to send **H 139** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

A committee member asked a question around preventing a clerk from abusing any part of the bill.

Rep. Holtzclaw declared Rule 80 stating a possible conflict of interest.

Yvonne Sandmire, Self; **Mary Ruckh**, Self; **Lisa Hecht**, Self; **Georgia Boatman**, Self; **Laura Miller**, Self; **Bonnie Shuster**, Self; **Kathy Ackerman**, Idaho Association of County Recorders and Clerks; **Phil McGrane**, Secretary of State; spoke **in opposition** of **H 139**.

Jackie Davidson, Self; **Tim ODonnell**, Secure Idaho; spoke **in support** of **H 139**.

Chairman Crane (13) asked how long Idaho had early voting in place, has there been a **H 139** type of bill in place in the past in the State of Idaho, increase of early voting and the types of opportunities around voting. Other members had questions around the State of Idaho Historical Absentee Voting Statistics diagram, current litigation on student ID affects, kinds of fraud identified with absentee voting, and the process of an absentee ballot.

Additional questions by the committee were around unreturned absentee ballots, election day voting, prevention of voting twice on election day, determination of dual ballots submitted, statistics around total registered voters vs absentee voters.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Rep. Mickelsen** made a substitution motion to **HOLD H 139** in committee.

Committee members commented on voter fraud in Idaho and asked if there was an exemption within the legislation around closed polling areas as in the case of the 2020 election, special legislative sessions, and early citizen voting. Another committee member made a comment around voters integrity importance, the affect of rural populations, exemptions to change absentee voting, Idaho elections to stay secure, county clerk judgement, and comments of violation of law.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Roll call vote was requested. **Substitute motion failed by a vote of 7 AYE and 7 NAY and 1 Absent/Excused. Voting in favor** of the motion: **Reps. Palmer, Holtzclaw, Boyle, Dygert, Mickelsen, Pohanka, Achilles. Voting in opposition** to the motion: **Reps. Crane (13), Scott, Barbieri, Skaug, Alfieri, Crane (12), Hostetler. Rep. Green was absent/excused.**

**ROLL CALL
VOTE ON
ORIGINAL
MOTION:**

Roll call vote was requested. **Original motion failed by a vote of 7 AYE and 7 NAY and 1 Absent/Excused. Voting in favor of the motion: Reps. Crane (13), Scott, Barbieri, Skaug, Alfieri, Crane (12), Hostetler. Voting in opposition to the motion: Reps. Palmer, Holtzclaw, Boyle, Dygert, Mickelsen, Pohanka, Achilles. Rep. Green was absent/excused.**

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:42 AM.

Representative Scott
Vice Chair

Liaza Richardson
Secretary