

MINUTES
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, January 19, 2026

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Guthrie, Vice Chairman Bernt, Senators Harris, Toews, Den Hartog, Adams, Shippy, and Ruchti

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Anthon

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: **Chairman Guthrie** called the meeting of the Senate State Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:00 a.m.

WELCOME: **Chairman Guthrie** welcomed all Committee Members and asked each Senator to provide a brief introduction.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW SECRETARY: **Chairman Guthrie** introduced the new Committee Secretary, Abby Rowe, and asked her to tell the Committee about herself. **Ms. Rowe** explained that she is originally from Oregon and moved to Idaho to attend Boise State University. She recently graduated, earning a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and a minor in Political Science.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW PAGE: **Chairman Guthrie** introduced the new Committee Page, Chayse Van Eps, and invited her to tell the Committee about herself. **Ms. Van Eps** is from Mud Lake, Idaho and attends West Jefferson High School. She plans to continue her education at BYU Hawaii after graduation and is interested in studying communications or journalism. She asked Senator Ruchti a question about his experience being in the minority party. **Senator Ruchti** responded that he likes that he is able to speak his mind freely.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW PAGE: **Chairman Guthrie** introduced the new Committee Page, Kristian Fusco, and asked him to share with the Committee some background about himself. **Mr. Fusco** is originally from San Diego, California but has resided in Eagle, Idaho for the past several years. He is interested in attending law school in the future or going into the biology field. He asked Chairman Guthrie a question about what he thinks is the most fulfilling part of doing such a difficult job. **Chairman Guthrie** explained that he appreciates having the ability to make fair, thoughtful, and respectful decisions that are right for the people of Idaho.

GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Megan Ronk of Boise, Idaho to the Commission on Human Rights** to serve a term commencing July 1, 2025 and expiring July 1, 2028. **Ms. Ronk** explained that she grew up in Mountain Home, Idaho and attended the College of Idaho in Caldwell. The early years of her career were spent in state government, including working for Governor Dirk Kempthorne as a policy advisor and Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter as the Director of the Idaho Department of Commerce. **Ms. Ronk** has been with the Commission on Human Rights since she was first appointed by Governor Otter in 2008. She expressed that she is passionate about the work she does with the Idaho Commission on Human Rights (Comission) because others are often not treated fairly in their professional careers. **Ms. Ronk** appreciated that the Commission serves as a forum to bring discrimination complaints forward.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Shippy** asked Ms. Ronk to walk the Committee through a time when the Commission had to balance the enforcement of a statute with protecting the due process of a respondent. **Ms. Ronk** gave a detailed account of the process in place for when complaints are brought to the Commission. **Senator Shippy** asked Ms. Ronk to expand on a time when the Commission declined to act after it found that a matter fell outside its statutory authority. **Ms. Ronk** explained that if a complaint is found to fall outside of the Commission's statutory authority then the Commission would not investigate and would end up dismissing the request for investigation. **Senator Den Hartog** asked Ms. Ronk to identify any patterns or changes she has noticed in her time on the Commission such as the volume or types of complaints being filed. **Ms. Ronk** stated in her experience, sex based discrimination or sexual harassment complaints continue to be a majority of what the Commission sees. **Senator Harris** made a comment highlighting the quality of people being brought before the Committee as gubernatorial appointments and highlighted Ms. Ronk's dedication to her career, specifically on past projects she has served on with Senator Harris.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: **Committee consideration of the Gubernatorial Appointment of Salvador Cruz of Boise, Idaho to the Treasurer's Investment Advisory Board** to serve a term commencing on January 1, 2026 and expiring July 1, 2028. **Mr. Cruz** began by giving the Committee an overview of his background and qualifications. He is originally from Rock Springs, Wyoming and attended South Dakota State University where he developed his interest in finance. He began his career in retail banking before moving on to the United States Treasury Department where he spent 13 years in various other roles, including Capital Markets Specialist and Subject Matter Expert. **Mr. Cruz** currently serves as the Financial Institutions Bureau Chief and Interim Director for the Idaho Department of Finance and thanked Governor Little for the opportunity to potentially serve on the Treasurer's Investment Advisory Board.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Guthrie** followed up on a comment by Mr. Cruz where he stated that he doesn't like the person on his resume. **Chairman Guthrie** asked Mr. Cruz why he feels that way as he has an impressive background. **Mr. Cruz** explained that his resume doesn't showcase his actual passion of working in finance, working for the people, and the engagement that comes from his job. **Senator Shippy** explained to Mr. Cruz that there has been legislation proposed in the past authorizing additional investment options, such as precious metals. **Senator Shippy** asked Mr. Cruz what criteria he would use to evaluate whether an option like this would be appropriate or wise for public funds in these areas. **Mr. Cruz** explained that he would be held to the prudent investment rule and other requirements of the state should legislation like this be passed. He elaborated on his personal standing, where he prefers finding assets that are working and earning additional returns, but would take his direction from the Treasurer and the rest of the Advisory Board in that situation. **Chairman Guthrie** asked Mr. Cruz to comment on federal debt due to his vast experience in the field of finance. **Mr. Cruz** explained that he viewed federal debt as a hindrance to personal action and believed that is a substantial problem that needs to be addressed.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Guthrie passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Bernt.

RULES REVIEW: Assignment of the Administrative Rules. Vice Chairman Bernt explained that he has distributed the rules to his fellow Committee Members. Both Chairman Guthrie and Senator Anthon were not assigned to a rule. **Vice Chairman Bernt** assigned himself to Idaho State Police (11.05.01). Senator Harris was assigned to the Idaho Public Safety Commission (15.06.01). Senator Toews was assigned the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (31.27.01). Senator Den Hartog was assigned the Temporary Rule regarding the Idaho Public Safety Communications Commission (15.06.01). Senator Adams was assigned to the Idaho State Lottery (52.01.03). Senator Shippy was assigned to the Idaho Department of Administration (38.04.04). Senator Ruchti was assigned to the Secretary of State (34.03.01).

ADJOURNED: Chairman Guthrie requested that Vice Chairman Bernt conclude the meeting of the Senate State Affairs Committee.

There being no further business at this time, **Vice Chairman Bernt** adjourned the meeting at 8:32 a.m.

Senator Guthrie
Chair

Abby Rowe
Secretary