

MINUTES  
**SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026

**TIME:** 8:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

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

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

**PRESENTATION:** **Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC) Budgeting Process Overview and Update.** **Senator Grow** introduced himself as representing District 14 and the Chairman of JFAC and welcomed Keith Bybee, Budget and Policy Analysis Division Manager for the Legislative Services Office. **Mr. Bybee** gave the Committee an in-depth review of several topics, including the structural balance of Idaho's General Fund, categorical breakdowns of the General Fund over the last ten years, a current budget update, the 2027 General Fund summary, cash positions from 2009 compared to 2026, and the distribution of sales tax (Attachments 1 and 2).

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Ruchti** asked Mr. Bybee to explain how revenue projections were missed when they were created and approved prior to the conclusion of the 2025 legislative session. **Mr. Bybee** noted that there were several tax bills introduced towards the end of last session after the adoption of the projections, which paired with an overlooked economic state, could have accounted for these errors. **Senator Ruchti** pointed out that the increase in expenditures in recent years could be the result of population growth and asked Mr. Bybee to comment on why these changes would not be considered normal anticipated growth. **Mr. Bybee** said that his team considered this and performed alternative calculations factoring in inflation and population growth over time and that there was still noticeable change per capita. **Senator Adams** asked Mr. Bybee to confirm that the Medicaid numbers provided were referring to Idaho's General Fund, which **Mr. Bybee** confirmed. **Senator Adams** inquired about how many of those new Idaho residents were on Medicaid if population is where growth was stemming from and asked him to touch on the growth in the education category. **Mr. Bybee** did not know the information on Medicaid statistics but informed the Committee that the increase relating to education was a result of the legislature adding significant funds to the public school budget. **Senator Ruchti** asked for clarification on state education spending and why it has increased. **Mr. Bybee** explained that state programs like the School Modernization Fund directly contributed to this increase.

**GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT:** **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Estella Zamora of Caldwell, Idaho to the Commission on Human Rights (Commission)**, to serve a term commencing July 1, 2025 and expiring July 1, 2028. **Ms. Zamora** explained that she had lived in Idaho for over sixty years. Her family worked in agricultural labor contracting and she was a migrant farmer before spending thirty years working as a translator for the Canyon County Courthouse. **Ms. Zamora** shared that she served as President for the Commission in the past and was now the Vice President. She explained that the Commission had excellent staff and she was passionate about people being treated with respect and dignity. For these reasons she hoped to continue her work with the Commission.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Shippy** asked Ms. Zamora what the most common type of case she had seen was. She responded that she most often saw cases involving disabilities. **Senator Shippy** asked for a specific example. **Ms. Zamora** described a situation where a worker was operating heavy machinery and suffered an injury. If the employer had denied responsibility for the accident, then the worker could file a complaint with the Commission and an investigation would occur. **Senator Adams** asked Ms. Zamora if she had seen immigration issues arise during her time on the Commission. **Ms. Zamora** shared that she had not, but she recalled an incident she encountered where discriminatory language was used against an employee for that reason.

**GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT VOTE:** **Committee Vote on the Gubernatorial Appointment of David Dean of Meridian, Idaho to the Idaho Endowment Investment Board**, to serve a term commencing April 11, 2025 and expiring April 11, 2029. **Senator Harris** moved to send the Gubernatorial Appointment of **David Dean**, to the Idaho Endowment Fund Investment Board, to the floor with the recommendation that he be confirmed. **Senator Bernt** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

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

**DOCKET NO. 31-2701-2501** **Rules Governing Pole Attachments (New Chapter)- Pending Rule.** **Taylor Thomas**, the Administrator of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (Commission), shared that the Commission's role is to ensure Idahoans receive safe, reliable, and reasonably-priced utility services. **Mr. Thomas** shared the purpose of this pending rule was to incorporate stakeholder feedback and create a hybrid rule that would allow compromise between electric utilities and the Federal Communications Commission. **Mr. Thomas** then provided the Committee with a detailed breakdown of the specific proposed changes.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Shippy** asked Mr. Thomas to share any feedback received from large landowners and to tell the Committee how they came to this final compromise. **Mr. Thomas** stated that they had not received any feedback from large landowners on this rule, therefore it was not taken into account when coming to a final agreement.

**MOTION:** **Senator Toews** moved to approve **Docket No. 31-2701-2501**. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PASS THE GAVEL:** Vice Chairman Bernt passed the gavel back to Chairman Guthrie.

**RS 32874** **Voting, Affidavit, Repeal.** **Senator Lenney** explained to the Committee that this legislation would eliminate a loophole in the electoral system, voter affidavits. He stated that while they are rarely used, there is no reason why Idahoans should vote without an valid identification card.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** noted that she had advised Senator Lenney to expand on the fiscal impact of **RS 32874**, **RS 32868**, and **RS 32970**, meaning there could be changes made to the Statements of Purpose and Fiscal Notes in the future.

**MOTION:** **Senator Toews** moved to send **RS 32874** to print. **Senator Adams** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 32868:** **Women's Commission, Repeal. Senator Lenney** explained that this legislation was in response to the 2025 Code Cleanup Act. He shared that the Women's Commission was defunded 17 years ago and he proposed a repeal of Idaho Code Chapter 60, Title 67.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS 32868** to print. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 32970** **Gubernatorial Appointments, Rejected. Senator Lenney** explained that this legislation would prevent those rejected by the Senate for Gubernatorially-appointed positions from being reappointed for at least one year. **Senator Lenney** believed that this legislation ensures the Senate's confirmation power was meaningful and taken seriously.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** shared a hesitation she had with specific language in **RS 32970** that would prevent those rejected by the Senate for Gubernatorially-appointed positions to be reappointed to any position, not limited to the one they were rejected from. She noted she would like clarification on specific language if this legislation moves forward.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS 32970** to print. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Guthrie** adjourned the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

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Senator Guthrie  
Chair

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Abby Rowe  
Secretary