

MINUTES  
**HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 02, 2026

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW42

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Ehardt, Vice Chairman Cornilles, Representatives Erickson, Skaug, Weber, Alfieri, Cheatum, Hawkins, Price, Cayler, Rasor, Wheeler, Hostetler, Marmon, Berch, Church

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**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 Ehardt** called the meeting to order at 1:31 PM.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Church** made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2026 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**H 557:** **Rep. Skaug** presented **H 557**, which prevents local government entities from imposing antidiscrimination ordinances which go beyond what is in Idaho statute. He stated this would preempt burdensome local ordinances and bring local regulations into alignment with the state. These antidiscrimination ordinances are often weaponized, with business owners having to take part or host events or activities which go against their religious beliefs. Rep. Skaug yielded his time to **Joel Fischer**, Director of Public Policy at the Idaho Family Policy Center.

**Joel Fischer** stated **H 557** is in alignment with Idaho statute, which allows the Idaho Legislature to restrict ordinances local government entities when they infringe on individual rights. He stated the patchwork of antidiscrimination ordinances throughout the state hinders market entry and economic growth for businesses. The legislation would prevent local governments from promulgating or enforcing antidiscrimination ordinances related to employment, housing, education institutions, and public accommodations when these ordinances go beyond what is recognized in Idaho statute, while also ensuring local governments have the ability to follow all the relevant provisions of state and federal law which impose antidiscrimination requirements.

If adopted, preexisting local antidiscrimination ordinances which fall under **H 557** are preempted, will allow the Idaho Attorney General to seek adjunctive relief, and allow businesses or property owners who may be harmed by noncompliant ordinances to bring lawsuits seeking relief. **Joel Fischer** stated the legislation does not allow businesses to discriminate in ways prohibited by state law, does not target anyone based on the bases of their gender or sexual orientation, and does not interfere with legitimate local control. The legislation stops local governments from targeting small business owners of faith, and prevents local regulations which make it difficult for small businesses to operate.

When answering questions, **Rep. Skaug** and **Joel Fischer** clarified **H 557** would help provide uniformity across the state regarding antidiscrimination, especially for small businesses. Mr. Fischer stated a symbolic resolution made by a local government could be preempted by the legislation if it extended beyond antidiscrimination already stated in Idaho statute. Rep. Skaug stated he was not aware of other states which have implemented similar legislation.

**Gregory Baylor**, representing Alliance Defending Freedom; **Donald Knapp**, representing self; Mayor of the City of Sandpoint **Jeremy Grimm**, representing self; **Jennifer Hook**, representing self; **David Callen**, representing self; **Craig Campbell**, representing Precinct 2009; **Ashley Mujagic**, representing self; **Mary Ellen Nourse**, representing self; **Michael Hon**, representing self; **Ryan Spoon**, representing self; and **Clare Lintereur**, representing self; testified in support of **H 557**. They stated local antidiscrimination ordinances can be highly restrictive on individuals' freedoms of religion and speech, require business owners to decide between their religious beliefs or harsh legal consequences, and create more divisions in communities. The legislation would protect individual freedoms and small businesses, and prevent ambiguous and restrictive antidiscrimination ordinances across the state. Mr. Knapp, former owner of the Hitching Post Wedding Chapel, and Ms. Hook, discussed their experiences on how local antidiscrimination ordinances were used against them due to their refusal to cater to events or accept situations which went against their religious and personal beliefs. Mayor Grimm stated City of Sandpoint revoked its original antidiscrimination ordinance due to the pragmatic position of legal risks it created, how it obligated the city beyond its means, and how it created division and conflicting expectations.

**Jonathan Wheatley**, representing Association of Idaho Cities; **Sue Muncaster**, representing the City of Victor; **Mistie DelliCarpini-Tolman**, representing Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates; **Kathy Griesmyer**, representing the City of Boise; **William Mitchell**, representing Legal Voice; **Tom Wheeler**, representing HomeFound Real Estate Group; **April Hoy**, representing self; **Rev. Sara LaWall**, representing Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship; **Linnae Grabner**, representing self; Mayor of the City of Moscow **Hailey Lewis**, representing the City of Moscow; **Nikson Mathews**, representing self; **Rev. Josh Lee**, representing Boise First United Church of Christ; **Paul Rolig**, representing self; and **Dr. Jean Henscheid**; representing League of Women Voters of Idaho; testified in opposition of **H 557**. They stated the legislation would threaten housing, employment, services, and safety of individuals who do not fall under traditional christian values, especially those in the LGBTQ community, and will undermine Idaho's ability to attract and retain businesses and skilled labor. They also stated the legislation is government overreach by the state. Mr. Wheatley, Ms. Muncaster, Ms. Griesmyer, and Mayor Lewis stated local antidiscrimination ordinances help prevent discrimination in legal situations which Idaho statute does not address, allows cities to attract and maintain new talent and businesses, and do not create division or restrict religious freedoms.

**Chairman Ehardt** put the committee at ease at 3:38 PM.

**Chairman Ehardt** resumed the meeting at 3:56 PM.

When providing closing statements, **Joel Fischer** clarified **H 557** would not negate housing protections under federal law, and the antidiscrimination ordinances do more harm than good for individuals they are meant to protect by making those individuals appear more of a liability for businesses. He stated the legislation is not unconstitutional because it does not restrict individuals in the LGBTQ community from bringing legislation reform, and does not affect employee antidiscrimination policies of businesses or local governments. The legislation addresses situations in which individuals have to choose between their conscious and legal punishment due to local antidiscrimination ordinances.

**MOTION:**

**Rep. Alfieri** made a motion to send **H 557** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

**Rep. Cayler** requested a roll call vote on the motion.

**Reps. Cheatum and Berch** spoke in opposition to the motion. Rep. Cheatum stated the City of Pocatello put in place an antidiscrimination ordinance in order to address discrimination in housing, and there are no signs this ordinance has negatively affect the city. Rep. Berch stated the state should not be negating ordinances which prevent one person in a community to decide how others can live their lives.

**ROLL CALL  
VOTE:**

**Chairman Ehardt** called a roll call vote on the motion to send **H 557** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by a vote of 13 AYE and 3 NAY.**  
**Voting in favor** of the motion: **Reps. Ehardt, Cornilles, Erickson, Skaug, Weber, Alfieri, Hawkins, Price, Cayler, Razor , Wheeler, Hostetler, and Marmon.**  
**Voting in opposition** of the motion: **Reps. Cheatum, Berch, and Church.** Rep. **Skaug** will sponsor the bill to the floor.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:12 PM.

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Representative Ehardt  
Chair

Elijah Phipps  
Secretary