

MINUTES
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 11, 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.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to approve the Minutes of February 4, 2026. **Senator Bernt** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT VOTE: **Committee Vote on the Gubernatorial Appointment of Ryan Lanham as State Athletic Commissioner** to serve a term commencing March 12, 2025 and expiring October 1, 2026. **Senator Harris** moved to send the Gubernatorial appointment of Ryan Lanham as State Athletic Commissioner to the floor with the recommendation that he be confirmed by the Senate. **Senator Adams** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 33249 **Senate Resolution, Administrative Rules.** **Senator Bernt** introduced this resolution stating that all temporary and pending rules relating to the Idaho State Police, Idaho Public Safety Communications Commission, Idaho Public Utilities Commission, Secretary of State, Idaho Department of Administration, and the Idaho State Lottery had been approved in full.

MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS33249** to print. **Senator Adams** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 33252 **Constitutional Amendment, Campaign Finance.** **Senator Bjerke** of District 5 introduced this joint memorial that established autonomy for Idaho's electoral process and laws, specifically as regarded campaign financing.

MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS 33252** to print. **Senator Anthon** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

S 1247 **EMPLOYMENT- Adds to existing law to establish the Idaho E-Verify Act.** **Senator Harris** introduced this legislation as an effort to implement E-Verify in Idaho to verify the legal status of employees. He emphasized that this would affect those contractors with the State that have over 150 employees and believed it would not yet be fit for small businesses. He shared that this was an effort to protect taxpayer dollars and that this would be a small step forward in addressing illegal immigration in Idaho and that neighboring states had implemented the same legislation. **Senator Harris** closed the discussion by sharing he was for compliance of the employer rather than punishment.

- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Adams** asked Senator Harris how effective E-Verify was in confirming the legal status of employees. **Senator Harris** said he couldn't speak to the accuracy, but believed it was effective considering it was implemented by other states and at the federal level. **Senator Adams** asked Senator Harris if this would affect the dairy industry in Idaho. **Senator Harris** believed it wouldn't unless they were contracted with state government. **Senator Toews** asked Senator Harris if Utah's implementation of E-Verify was similar to this legislation or if it was more widespread. **Senator Harris** was unsure how widespread it was in Utah, but noted that their employee number qualification was the same. **Senator Toews** clarified his question and asked if Utah's E-Verify covered the private sector. **Senator Harris** did not know the answer. **Senator Shippy** expressed that if the intent was to protect taxpayer dollars, he would like to see this implemented more widespread, to anyone contracting with the State, and asked for Senator Harris to weigh in. **Senator Harris** said that he understood but chose employers with 150 or more employees because small businesses often don't have the ability to easily implement a program like E-Verify whereas larger businesses already often deal with requirements of this nature.
- Senator Den Hartog** asked Senator Harris if there was any protection for employers in the instance that someone submits fake documents and was then found to be illegally working. **Senator Harris** said that he didn't think there would be a linear process for proving employer innocence and he believed this was one problem with E-Verify. This was part of the reason he would like to implement it with those contracting with state government before involving small businesses.
- Senator Ruchti** said that as efforts like E-Verify were implemented at the state level, it could encourage the federal government to do its job when it came to immigration reform. **Senator Harris** expressed that he hoped that would be the case and said it was hard for the State to implement patchwork solutions when the issue was not being properly addressed at the federal level. **Senator Ruchti** asked Senator Harris about state business licenses to confirm they were not something Idaho had. **Senator Harris** said he wasn't sure and would need to verify that.
- TESTIMONY:** **Michael Angiletta** of Rathdrum, Idaho, representing Secure Idaho, testified in opposition to **S 1247**. Mr. Angiletta shared he was a small business owner and pointed out that this legislation was narrow and preserved illegal labor loopholes. He believed employer behavior would not change and that this legislation would delay the immigration reforms that Idaho really needed.
- TESTIMONY:** **Tim O'Donnell** of Meridian, Idaho, representing Secure Idaho, testified in opposition to **S 1247**. He believed this legislation fell short on coverage as it would not apply to all Idaho businesses. He believed that legislation in this area needed to better align with public policy and that nothing would change if employers didn't want it to, given that implementation would be a choice.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Anthon** expressed his position on immigration enforcement and shared research he did on a business in Nebraska that used E-Verify on 100 percent of its employees, but it was found that there were still approximately 70 people illegally working there. He said that although employers were using E-Verify, it was not guaranteed to be effective all the time. **Mr. O'Donnell** agreed with Senator Anthon and echoed his previous point about these illegal employment loopholes.
- MOTION:** **Senator Anthon** moved to send **S 1247** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Bernt** seconded the motion. **Chairman Guthrie** requested a roll call vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE: **Chairman Guthrie, Vice Chairman Bernt, Senators Ruchti, Adams, Harris, and Anthon** voted aye. **Senators Shippy, Den Hartog, and Toews** voted nay. The motion carried.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Anthon** shared the reasoning for his motion and acknowledged the concerns brought up in testimony. He believed there was a general frustration toward the federal government for its lack of action on this issue and shared the frustrations felt by state legislators who want but cannot do much to address this problem. **Senator Toews** saw the intent of the sponsor and appreciated the effort to promote legislative consistency among states. He believed this legislation was a step in the right direction but didn't believe it went far enough, which was why he felt he couldn't support the motion. **Senator Adams** shared he would support the motion, but emphasized the need for further discussion on this legislation to work out concerns. **Senator Shippy** believed this legislation was a good place to start in addressing this problem and, as a small business owner himself, acknowledged that taking extra steps in the hiring process can be burdensome. He said he wanted to do the right thing by taxpayers, but had conflicting feelings about this legislation. **Senator Den Hartog** echoed Senator Anthon's position on the lack of action by the federal government and pointed out her main concern which was that E-Verify did not flag falsified paperwork. **Vice Chairman Bernt** acknowledged that this was a complicated topic and thanked Senator Harris for bringing forward this legislation. **Vice Chairman Bernt** shared he would support this motion with hesitation, and believed this could promote more fraud. **Chairman Guthrie** shared he would support the motion and offered his appreciation to Senator Harris for his willingness to address a tough issue.

S 1236 **IDAHO WOMEN'S COMMISSION- Repeals existing law relating to the Idaho Women's Commission.** **Senator Lenney** explained that this bill was in response to the Idaho Code Cleanup Act passed in the Senate during the 2025 Session. He noted that the Idaho Women's Commission had not been operating for the last 17 years and believed this was code cleanup with little community impact.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Bernt** asked Senator Lenney to clarify that there was not an active Women's Commission in Idaho, which **Senator Lenney** confirmed. **Senator Toews** asked Senator Lenney if he was married and if his wife supported this legislation. **Senator Lenney** said he was married and that he had not spoken with her specifically about this, but believed she would support this legislation if asked. **Senator Anthon** asked Senator Lenney if he had received any opposition to this bill. **Senator Lenney** said he had not received notice of any opposition to this bill but acknowledged there could be opposition he wasn't aware of. **Senator Lenney** closed the discussion by emphasizing that this was simply a code cleanup, and that women have come a long way since the 1960's, a time when commissions like this would have been more necessary than they are now.

TESTIMONY: **Dr. Mary Mosley** of Meridian, Idaho, President of the American Association of University Women in Idaho, testified in opposition to **S 1236** because she believed there was no purpose for this legislation and that it would send a negative message to the women of Idaho.

- DISCUSSION:** **Vice Chairman Bernt** acknowledged the strong women in his life and the reason for establishing a Women's Commission and asked Dr. Mosley if there was any indication at this time that the Idaho Women's Commission would be revived after 17 years of inactivity. **Dr. Mosley** shared that she had spoken with several people who desired to reactivate the Idaho Women's Commission. **Senator Shippy** asked Dr. Mosley what the definition of a woman was. **Dr. Mosley** noted that she was a doctor of poetry, not biology, but that a woman was a person with two X chromosomes. **Senator Anthon** explained that he had done research on the history of the Idaho Women's Commission and understood that prior to its defunding, there were several problems with diversity, representation, and leadership. He asked Dr. Mosley if she had any insight on those issues. **Dr. Mosley** said she did not as she did not live in Idaho during that time.
- TESTIMONY:** **Kathy Dawes** of Moscow, Idaho, representing herself, testified in opposition to **S 1236**. Ms. Dawes shared that she believed there was a need and desire to reestablish the Idaho Women's Commission. She highlighted some issues surrounding women in Idaho, including women's incarceration rates and destabilized families.
- DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Guthrie** asked Ms. Dawes if she had any insight on the issues that arose before the Idaho Women's Commission deactivation mentioned by Senator Anthon, or the budget that the Women's Commission once had. **Ms. Dawes** said she did not know that information.
- TESTIMONY:** **Marsha Bravo** of Garden City, Idaho, representing the League of Women Voters (League), testified in opposition to **S 1236**. **Ms. Bravo** shared that the League's opposition to **S 1236** was supported by women's groups across Idaho who believed that it was time to revive the Women's Commission. She stated that women make up 52% of Idaho's population, but are under represented in state leadership. **Ms. Bravo** believed this under-representation contributed to a lack of conversation surrounding important issues, such as the shortage of women's medical providers.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Shippy** asked Ms. Bravo if she believed the Idaho Women's Commission was necessary for women to feel successful or empowered. **Ms. Bravo** said yes, because of the representation and visibility it gave to women.
- MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **S 1236** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** shared the reasoning for her motion and acknowledged the hardships that women had gone through that paved the way for her to serve in the Idaho Senate today. She stated there was competent female leadership and representation within the Legislature and believed she and the other female legislators were heard and respected by their male counterparts. **Senator Den Hartog** said that the Idaho Women's Commission was not necessary for the State of Idaho and believed the issues handled by the Women's Commission would be better handled in the private sector.

Vice Chairman Bernt said he wanted to give concerned citizens a chance to revive it and shared he would not support this motion. **Vice Chairman Bernt** urged those who wanted to revive the Idaho Women's Commission to take action within the next year. **Senator Shippy** said he was in support of this motion because he was not convinced that the women in his life, or the women of Idaho, needed an established Women's Commission to inspire them and to be successful. **Senator Ruchti** shared that he was not in support of the motion because although the Women's Commission was not necessary for women to feel empowered and be successful, there was still work to be done in this area and reestablishing a Women's Commission would be a step forward. **Senator Toews** said that he spoke with his wife and adult daughters about this legislation and they were in support of it moving forward, as was he. He echoed Senator Den Hartog's point that something like this would be great in the private sector, but believed it was unnecessary in government. **Senator Anthon** pointed out that Senator Den Hartog held the position of Senate Majority Leader, a position given to her by her male and female counterparts, in an effort to show the support that women in leadership had in the Idaho Legislature.

Senator Anthon shared his support for the motion and pointed out his confusion as to why efforts to reinstate the Women's Commission were just now occurring when there were no known efforts for the last 17 years. He emphasized the disorganized state of the Idaho Women's Commission at the time of its defunding and shared that it was Democratic women in the House of Representatives and the Senate who moved to defund it in the first place. **Senator Anthon** reiterated the Legislature's support of women in leadership and did not believe this legislation was an effort to undermine the women of Idaho.

VOICE VOTE: The motion to send **S 1236** to the floor with a do pass recommendation carried by **voice vote** with **Senator Ruchti** and **Vice Chairman Bernt** voting nay.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Guthrie** adjourned the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Senator Guthrie
Chair

Abby Rowe
Secretary