

MINUTES
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & DEFENSE COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 16, 2026

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Palmer, Vice Chairman Mitchell, Representatives Holtzclaw, Monks, Shepherd, Crane(12), Handy, Hill, Petzke, Boyle, Harris, Mickelsen, Pohanka, Veile, Gannon, Green

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

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 Palmer called the meeting to order at 1:31pm.

MOTION: **Rep. Pohanka** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 4 and 10, 2026 meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 33209: **Rep. Green**, District 18, stated this proposed legislation addresses two issues. First, it is clean up for the Highway Distribution Account (HDA). It streamlines the distribution process for vehicle registration fees and fuel taxes and it updates the HDA distribution to treat all user fee funds the same; a 60% state and 40% local split consistent with current policy. It also removes the Idaho State Police (ISP) from the HDA because over a five-year period, ISP phased out from receiving funds from the HDA to now receiving funds from the General Fund. Secondly, this proposed legislation ensures bridge safety by increasing the funding for local bridge inspections from \$175,000 to \$300,000 for FY2027.

MOTION: **Rep. Mickelsen** made a motion to introduce **RS 33209**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 33409: **Rep. Mickelsen**, District 32, stated this proposed legislation adds a late fee of \$75.00 when individuals fail to register their vehicles within 30 days of moving to Idaho.

In response to a committee question regarding if it is possible to collect back fees, **Rep. Mickelsen** responded it is allowed to collect back registration fees, but an individual can only be assessed one late fee.

MOTION: **Rep. Petzke** made a motion to introduce **RS 33409**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 532: **Rep. Mitchell**, District 6, stated this legislation promotes consistent identity validation requirements by combining driver's licenses, registration, and titling into one system, supporting the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) system's objective of "one person, one record." This simplifies the application process as DMV services and county offices offer combined functions of driver identity and vehicle services. He commented, for new customers to DMV, this helps to confirm who they say they are as well as utilizing enhanced efficiency of the "one person, one record" approach to strengthen identity verification that meet the driver's license and ID standards for all transactions.

MOTION: **Rep. Shepherd** made a motion to send **H 532** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Mitchell** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Chairman Palmer turned the gavel over to **Vice Chair Mitchell**.

H 629:

Rep. Palmer, District 20, stated this legislation will allow an electronic format of a vehicle registration to be used in place of a paper card.

In response to committee questions, **Rep. Palmer** stated if you take a picture of the registration on your phone and are out of cell phone range, you will always have that picture available. Also, it's the individual's choice whether to carry the paper registration in the vehicle, or use the new digital version, or both; it is not an "either or" situation.

Captain Ray Talbot, Idaho Sheriff's Association, spoke **in opposition to H 629**. He stated, while technology can improve conveniences for motorists, officer safety must remain the highest priority. During a traffic stop, minimizing movement inside the vehicle is critical and asking a driver to retrieve a phone from their body introduces unnecessary risk to officer safety, especially in low light or high stress situations. Additionally, a paper registration requires a signature verifying the driver has insurance, so a digital version of registration would not provide that proof.

Committee members expressed concern regarding **Captain Talbot's** testimony and answers to questions because drivers would already reach for their wallets, either out of their pockets or from a purse or console, to present their driver's license to the officer. Additionally, the driver can already present their phone to show proof of insurance. There was also concern a law enforcement officer would approach a vehicle before running the license plate, which would provide information regarding the driver and vehicle ahead of contact with the driver.

Rep. Palmer stood and closed. He stated he has the utmost respect for law enforcement, but had to disagree with most of what **Captain Talbot** presented. He believes most officers would run the license plate before approaching a vehicle so would have most of the information ahead of talking to the driver. He also believed most drivers, like him, would tell the officer what they were reaching for to alleviate any concern from the officer.

Rep. Green declared Rule 80, stating her husband is a law enforcement officer.

Several committee members voiced their concern with **H 629** from being uncomfortable with an officer taking possession of the driver's phone to why is this change necessary.

MOTION:

Rep. Hill made a motion to send **H 629** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Boyle** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY.** **Rep. Palmer** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:56pm.

Representative Palmer
Chair

Tracey McDonnell
Secretary