

MINUTES  
**SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, March 02, 2026

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

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Guthrie, Vice Chairman Bernt, Senators Anthon, Harris, Toews, Den Hartog, Bruner (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.

**WELCOME:** **Chairman Guthrie** welcomed Darl Bruner who was substituting for Senator Adams. **Acting Senator Bruner** shared he was raised in Boise and currently lived in Nampa with his wife of almost 50 years. He said it was nice to be back in the Boise area and that he appreciated the hard work of the Senators.

**RS 33579** **Rangelands and Pastoralists. Senator Burtenshaw** explained that this legislation recognized rangelands and those that pasture on rangelands. He said rangelands make up 54% of Idaho land and had become economic drivers for rural communities.

**MOTION:** **Senator Bernt** moved to send **RS 33579** to print. **Senator Shippy** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 32829C1** **Project Choice, Fee. Senator Woodward** introduced this legislation as a five dollar fee increase proposal for the purpose of raising Idaho State Trooper pay.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS 32829C1** to print. **Senator Bernt** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 33544** **Cash Rounding. Senator Ricks** voiced that he worked with Idaho Retailers and the Attorney General's Office on this legislation which was a replacement for **S 1329**. He said the U.S. Treasury had stopped minting the penny, so this legislation would deal with penny rounding when cash payments were made.

**MOTION:** **Senator Shippy** moved to send **RS 33544** to print. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 33560** **Scholarship Limitations, Athletes. Senator Okuniewicz** said this replaced **S 1289** and implemented feedback received from state universities regarding scholarship limitations for athletes.

**MOTION:** **Senator Toews** moved to send **RS 33560** to print. **Senator Shippy** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 33554** **Gubernatorial Appointment. Senator Lenney** explained this legislation would prevent someone who was rejected by the Senate for a Gubernatorially appointed position from being reappointed to that same position within one year of the rejection.

- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Bernt** asked Senator Lenney if he had already introduced this legislation this year. **Senator Lenney** explained a version of it had been introduced but that he received feedback from other Senators. The new legislation differed because it allowed for a Gubernatorial appointee to be appointed to another position, just not the same position. **Senator Lenney** said that the old legislation would have prevented the person from being reappointed to any position following Senate rejection.
- MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS 33554** to print. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 33552** **Virtual Currency Fraud Prevention.** **Senator Ruchti** shared that he had received input from a stakeholder on the previous version of this legislation so this was an updated version that targeted virtual currency fraud prevention.
- MOTION:** **Senator Harris** moved to send **RS 33552** to print. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 33483** **Wildlife Crossings.** **Senator Bernt** explained this legislation would recognize and support the implementation of wildlife crossings.
- MOTION:** **Senator Toews** moved to send **RS 33483** to print. **Senator Ruchti** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** pointed out that this legislation was formatted as a House Concurrent Resolution and was concerned the Committee could not introduce it in its current form.
- MOTION:** **Chairman Guthrie** stated that due to a clerical error, the motion to send **RS 33483** to print would not be entertained.
- RS 33575** **Accessory Dwelling Units.** **Senator Toews** said this was a redraft of a previous bill that allowed accessory dwelling units by right. He said this version had few minor changes.
- MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS 33575** to print. **Senator Shippy** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 33564** **Twin Home, Duplex Regulations.** **Senator Toews** said this legislation would allow for twin homes and duplexes to be built in single-family residential zones.
- MOTION:** **Senator Harris** moved to send **RS 33564** to print. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 33568** **Starter Home Subdivisions.** **Senator Toews** explained that this would deal with starter home subdivisions with the hope that it allowed for more affordable housing to be built.
- MOTION:** **Senator Shippy** moved to send **RS 33568** to print. **Senator Ruchti** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 33540** **Education, Career Ladder.** **Senator Harris** explained that there had been a pattern of former school teachers who had moved on to school administration but that had returned to teaching. In doing so, they lost their career ladder. He said this legislation would fix that problem.
- MOTION:** **Senator Toews** moved to send **RS 33540** to print. **Senator Ruchti** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

- RS 33533**      **Land Subdivisions, Family Member.** **Senator Harris** shared that this was a private property bill that would allow for farmers to gift immediate family members five acres of land to build a house on. He explained that this was in response to an issue with high land values and county ordinances that prevented farmers from breaking off parcels of land, something that made it increasingly difficult for new generations to stay on family farms.
- MOTION:**      **Senator Toews** moved to send **RS 33533** to print. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 33542**      **Highway Districts, Elections.** **Senator Den Hartog** voiced this was a redraft of previous legislation relating to single county-wide highway districts that would propose elections be partisan and voted on county-wide, starting in 2028.
- MOTION:**      **Senator Harris** moved to send **RS 33542** to print. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 33232**      **Idaho, Taiwan, Partnerships.** **Senator Anthon** shared that this was a Senate Concurrent Resolution that recognized the unique relationship and economic ties Idaho had with Taiwan.
- MOTION:**      **Senator Bernt** moved to send **RS 33232** to print. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 33551**      **Italy, Idaho Relationship.** **Senator Anthon** explained this resolution recognized the new establishment of an honorary Consulate of Italy in Idaho. He said it also recognized the strong economic ties Italy had with the State of Idaho.
- MOTION:**      **Senator Shippy** moved to send **RS 33551** to print. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- S 1338**      **STATE TREASURER - Amends existing law to provide that idle moneys may be invested in physical gold and silver in certain instances, to provide storage of physical gold and silver, and to provide for a maximum allowed investment.** **Senator Hart** said that this legislation would allow for the Idaho State Treasurer to invest money into silver and gold bullion in order to diversify the investment portfolio (Attachment 1). He clarified that this would give the Idaho State Treasurer permissive authority, but did not require them to take this action.
- DISCUSSION:**      **Senator Harris** referenced language from this legislation's statement of purpose and asked Senator Hart what a class one storage vault was and how the distinction between classes was determined. **Senator Hart** explained that the classes for storage vaults were determined by how long it took for a professional to breach them. He said a class one vault was considered to be the hardest type of vault to breach, which is where the silver and gold bullion would be stored. **Senator Harris** asked how many class one vaults were in Idaho. **Senator Hart** said that there were at least two class one vaults that he knew of but explained commercial banks often have them as well, so there could be several more. **Senator Bernt** asked Senator Hart if he looked into the State of Idaho housing its own gold and silver bullion. **Senator Hart** explained he didn't look into that but any class one vault would meet the requirements laid out in this legislation
- Chairman Guthrie** asked Senator Hart who classified which vaults were class one. **Senator Hart** believed that would be done by the Department of Finance and that they have a working relationship with the two precious metal depositories in Idaho. **Chairman Guthrie** asked Senator Hart if he had any hesitation about giving one person the authority to invest money in gold and silver bullion. **Senator Hart** explained that he did not have any hesitation because the Idaho State Treasurer answered to an advisory board. He said he had talked to Idaho's Treasurer and he was confident that investments like this would not move forward without approval from the advisory board.

- MOTION:** **Senator Shippy** moved to send **S 1338** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Bernt** expressed that he would be in support of this legislation when it could be assured that Idaho will hold its own gold and silver bullion. **Senator Shippy** believed it was a good idea to diversify Idaho's investment portfolio and that because the State Treasury Investment Advisory Board was Gubernatorially appointed and confirmed by the Senate, he trusted the individuals were qualified to make investment decisions. **Senator Shippy** said he appreciated that since this legislation was meant to permit these investments rather than require them, that it was a good step for Idaho.
- VOICE VOTE:** The motion to send **S 1338** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation carried by **voice vote** with **Chairman Guthrie**, **Vice Chairman Bernt**, and **Senator Ruchti** voting nay.
- S 1323** **IDAHO CONSTITUTIONAL MONEY ACT OF 2025 - Amends existing law to provide for the specific performance of tendering the type of form of specie expressly designated in certain contracts.** **Senator Hart** explained that this legislation focused on a bill passed in 2025 that declared gold and silver coins minted by the United States as legal tender in the State of Idaho. He said that this legislation would add a gold clause to that bill, which would enforce contract breaches that specified payment in gold or silver bullion.
- MOTION:** **Senator Toews** moved to send **S 1323** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Bernt** expressed he would support the motion but that he would be doing more research before supporting this bill on the Senate floor if the motion passed.
- VOICE VOTE:** The motion to send **S 1323** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation carried by **voice vote**.
- S 1299** **DIGITAL IDENTIFICATION - Adds to existing law to establish provisions regarding limitations on digital identification.** **Senator Nichols** explained that this legislation would prevent Idaho from mandating digital identification. She believed that participation in public life should not depend on owning a smart phone. **Senator Nichols** clarified that it would not ban the use of digital identification altogether, but would instead ensure that physical identification remained fully valid for all governmental purposes.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Shippy** shared he was unfamiliar with current digital identification requirements and regulations and asked Senator Nichols if there were currently any public entities in Idaho using digital identification. **Senator Nichols** explained that other states had done so, but for Idaho this would be a proactive measure to prevent digital identification mandates. **Senator Bernt** expressed that he had heard talk about implementing a digital system for driver's licenses. He asked Senator Nichols to clarify that this would not prevent the creation of that, but would prevent it from being mandated. **Senator Nichols** said that was correct. **Senator Den Hartog** pointed out the civil penalties noted in this legislation and asked Senator Nichols why that was necessary to include in a proactive measure. **Senator Nichols** explained that past legislation had shown her if penalties were not included, then often rules were not enforceable. She clarified that there was an adjustment period provided for those who were not in compliance and if the action was not corrected, that was when the civil penalties would apply. **Chairman Guthrie** asked Senator Nichols what would trigger a civil penalty enforcement. **Senator Nichols** said that if a violation was found and not corrected within the given adjustment period, civil penalties would be enforced then rather than at the immediate discovery of a violation.

**Senator Bernt** thanked Senator Den Hartog for bringing the civil penalty language to the Committee's attention and explained that discretion for civil penalties was given to the Office of the Attorney General. **Senator Bernt** asked Senator Nichols if she was willing to send **S 1299** to the 14th Order for possible amendment. **Senator Nichols** said she would be willing to do that. **Senator Shippy** asked Senator Nichols if agencies could mandate digital identification without legislative oversight. **Senator Nichols** believed anything was possible in that regard. **Senator Shippy** said he believed this was the first definition of digital identification in Idaho law and asked Senator Nichols if that definition would then allow agencies to move forward with digital identification implementation. **Senator Nichols** said she believed local entities would lack the resources and ability to implement these systems but that on the public agency-scale this legislation would prevent mandatory digital identification. She explained federal agencies like the Transportation Security Administration had already implemented voluntary forms of digital identification. **Chairman Guthrie** asked Senator Nichols her thoughts about future technological advances where a split system of digital and physical identification would seem advantageous. **Senator Nichols** reiterated that this was a proactive measure so this legislation could be revisited if that time came.

- MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **S 1299** to the **14th Order of Business** for possible amendment. **Senator Bernt** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** shared that she had heard of several conversations surrounding the implementation of digital identification by agencies like the Department of Motor Vehicles. She believed that implementation of digital identification would take legislative action and affirmation if used on a larger scale in the future.
- VOICE VOTE:** The motion to send **S 1299** to the **14th Order of Business** for possible amendment carried by **voice vote**.
- ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, Chairman Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 8:46 a.m.

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Senator Guthrie  
Chair

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Abby Rowe  
Secretary