

MINUTES  
**SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, March 05, 2026

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW54

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair VanOrden, Senators Bjerke (Bjerke), Zuiderveld, Lenney, Blaylock, Keyser, and Wintrow

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senators Harris and Shippy

**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:** **Chair VanOrden** called the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.

**H 723** **CHILD CARE LICENSING - Adds to existing law to provide for department oversight for residential care facilities, licensing requirements, facility documentation requirements, and the youth bill of rights.** **Representative Marco Erickson** explained this legislation would create § 39-1210A in Idaho Code establishing requirements for Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) quality of care oversight. This would include inspection and interview requirements for children in residential care. This bill further amended Idaho Code by adding § 39-1210B which would establish provisions for individualized service planning and documentation requirements for residential care facilities. He explained this bill also created a youth bill of rights for residential facilities and established provisions regarding critical incident reporting.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Blaylock** stated everything in this bill was already in administrative rule. She questioned why the language was duplicated in the bill without a provision to strike administrative rule. **Representative Erickson** explained this legislation strengthened oversight and the youth bill of rights was a new way to ensure parents and children were informed of their rights.

**Senator Zuiderveld** asked if the annual unannounced inspection would violate the Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution. **Representative Erickson** stated it would not violate the Fourth Amendment because the facilities were licensed to operate as residential care facilities. **Senator Zuiderveld** stated she was still concerned by the language.

**Senator Lenney** asked why the legislation directed IDHW to create certain documents and define violations instead of including them in the bill. **Representative Erickson** stated the enforcement mechanisms were listed on line 36 and included corrective action plans, sanctions, and withholding payments. **Senator Lenney** questioned whether the use of "evidence-based and trauma informed" language would impact faith-based facilities. **Representative Erickson** stated faith-based facilities were protected under current law and the use of prayer would not be a violation under this legislation.

**Senator Lenney** questioned the fiscal note of zero because the legislation required so much from IDHW. He asked whether IDHW already had the capacity to carry out the legislation. **Representative Erickson** stated he consulted IDHW when drafting the legislation and they confirmed **H 723** could be implemented with their existing capacity. The proposal did not significantly increase duties but formalized existing practices to improve clarity and accountability. The bill introduced a requirement for at least one unannounced visit, in addition to announced visits. The purpose of unannounced visits was to prevent facilities from selectively presenting favorable cases or staff, thereby enabling more objective oversight. This legislation supported more thorough and unbiased assessments, including targeted interviews and staff review when concerns arose. Overall, the goal was to enhance transparency and better protect children in residential care facilities.

**Acting Senator Bjerke (Bjerke)** stated she agreed with the intent of the legislation, but she wanted to see stricter consequences. She explained even with the unannounced inspection and critical incident reports the legislation would still allow ways around truthful reporting and surprise visits. **Representative Erickson** explained that **H 723** aimed to address the gaps identified by the Office of Performance Evaluation (OPE) report.

**Senator Zuiderveld** cited language in the bill that stated "conduct other activities as it deems appropriate" and asked for examples of these other activities. **Representative Erickson** stated some examples related to internal practices within child protection or mental health licensing, where audit-specific language was used to support IDHW functions.

**TESTIMONY:** **Gillian Cochrane, Jessica Hayes, Vienna Supon and Caroline Cole**, 11:11 Media Impact, testified in support of **H 723**. The testifiers shared personal experiences and emphasized the bill was needed to protect Idaho children.

**DISCUSSION:** **Representative Erickson** emphasized the Legislature's duty to protect future generations and asserted this bill would advance that goal without causing harm. He explained this was a constructive step forward, and was open to future improvements. In closing, he stated the bill would positively impact children by helping prevent future adverse experiences.

**Senator Zuiderveld** asked for the ages of children that were placed in residential facilities. **Representative Erickson** explained it was dependent on the type of facility and type of licensure the facility held. Generally, the children were 14 years or older.

**MOTION:** **Senator Wintrow** moved to send **H 723** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Blaylock** seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Wintrow** explained as the co-chair of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee (JLOC), she reviewed the OPE report when it was released. She stated it was rewarding to see the report findings used to create legislation that addressed the gaps identified.

**Senator Zuiderveld** stated she would support the motion but wanted to do more research and reserved her right to change her vote on the floor.

**Acting Senator Bjerke (Bjerke)** stated **H 723** was a great start but she wanted to see more severe consequences for individuals who violated the child bill of rights set forth in the legislation. She stated she would support the motion but reserved her right to change her vote on the floor.

**Senator Lenney** stated he would support the motion. However, he would have liked IDHW present to address certain questions and acknowledged the need for this legislation and to investigate fraud and abuse in residential facilities.

**VOICE VOTE:** The motion to send **H 723** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation carried by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION:** **Telligen. Nancy Johnson**, RN-BSN, Senior Manager, Telligen Quality Improvement, presented information on the Telligen Quality Improvement and Case Management contract (Attachment 1).

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Wintrow** asked for the amount IDHW paid for the contract. **Ms. Johnson** explained for case management services in 2025 she thought the amount was about \$875,000. **Senator Wintrow** requested the amount for the entire Telligen contract. **Ms. Johnson** stated it was about \$240,000 per month.

**Senator Blaylock** asked how many people Telligen serviced and how many employees managed cases. **Ms. Johnson** explained there were 170 people fully engaged in the program. Telligen reached out to a little over 1,000 people over the year. She explained not every person was fully engaged in the case management program. She stated for the case management program Telligen employed five full-time case managers and two administrative and support staff.

**Senator Blaylock** stated on Transparent Idaho it showed the Telligen contract total for last year was \$3.3 million but this year already showed a cost of \$2.3 million. She asked what services Telligen provided in addition to case management and what caused the increase in 2026. **Ms. Johnson** explained she did not think they had billed \$2.3 million this year as they had only billed for January and February. She offered to provide the Committee the financial information at a later date. She explained Telligen provided utilization management services and quality oversight. The State contracted Telligen to meet the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) mandate for quality oversight of all state Medicaid programs.

**Senator Blaylock** referenced the fraud detection Telligen provided and asked what happened when Telligen reported fraud. **Ms. Johnson** explained when Telligen reported possible fraud it was sent to the Idaho Medicaid program integrity team and IDHW investigated. She stated it was their duty to report anything that could be fraud or abuse of the system.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chair VanOrden** adjourned the meeting at 4:03 p.m.

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Senator VanOrden  
Chair

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Madysen Crea  
Secretary