

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 12, 2026

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

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

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: **Acting Chair Harris** called the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:02 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Wintrow** moved to approve the Minutes of February 12, 2026. **Senator Keyser** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Blaylock** moved to approve the Minutes of February 16, 2026. **Senator Shippy** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Keyser** moved to approve the Minutes of February 17, 2026. **Senator Wintrow** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 593 **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY - Amends and repeals existing law to remove reference to outdated or unnecessary provisions.** **Senator Semmelroth** explained this legislation was brought forth as a result of the Idaho Code Cleanup Act, or H 14, passed by the Legislature in 2025. This legislation repealed or updated 19 sections of Idaho Code Title 39 related to the State Hazardous Waste Management Planning Committee, which started in 1985 and disbanded in 1987. **Senator Semmelroth** reviewed changes to the following sections:

- Sections 2 and 3 removed obsolete definitions and references.
- Section 4 repealed the code that established the planning committee.
- Sections 5 and 6 repealed the code related to the state hazardous waste management plan and how it was presented to the Legislature.
- Section 7 repealed the code related to permits and licensing existing before that state hazardous waste management plan was in effect.
- Section 8 amended outdated language.
- Section 9 repealed the code related to the Big Payette Lake Water Quality Act.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Blaylock** thanked Senator Semmelroth for her thorough explanation of the bill.

MOTION: **Senator Blaylock** moved to send **H 593** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Shippy** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Acting Chair Harris passed the gavel to Chair VanOrden.

H 714 **HAZARDOUS WASTE - Amends and adds to existing law to provide for hazardous waste management. Acting Senator Bjerke (Bjerke)** explained this legislation repealed Idaho Code § 39-58, the Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Act, and revised and moved certain provisions from Title 39 Chapter 58 to Chapter 44. This eliminated unnecessary code, but maintained all regulatory provisions to ensure hazardous waste management facilities were sited safely and with input from the community. This legislation consolidated all state laws on hazardous waste into a single chapter of Idaho Code.

TESTIMONY: **Roy Eiguren**, Republic Services, testified in favor of **H 714**. He explained from the operator perspective this legislation was necessary and user friendly.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Wintrow** asked if someone from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) could explain how this legislation protected public safety. **Natalie Walker**, Chief of the Hazardous Waste Bureau, DEQ, explained this legislation ensured safety for both public health and the environment by considering the location of new hazardous waste treatment, storage, or disposal facilities that would be disposing of hazardous waste on the land or incinerating it, treating it, or storing it. This legislation accounted for the location and the geology of facility locations. The public would be able to voice their concerns to a panel that had the expertise to address questions and concerns. The panel would identify both the benefits of a facility and any potential risks from accidents, releases, spills, or transportation accidents.

MOTION: **Senator Harris** moved to send **H 714** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Blaylock** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 788 **MEDICAID - Adds to existing law to establish provisions regarding Medicaid prior authorization exemptions for certain preceptorships. Representative Josh Wheeler** explained this legislation established a prior authorization exemption for certain physicians who provided substantial preceptorship training to graduate medical students in Idaho, particularly in rural and under-served communities. Three highest need specialties were identified: family practice, obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN), and psychology. This legislation directed the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) to set up a program for up to 100 professionals per year, that would incentivize medical preceptorships by decreasing the administrative burden of prior authorizations. He requested, based on Senator Blaylock's suggestion, that the Committee send this legislation to the 14th Order to add sunset language. The sunset language would end this program on July 1, 2030, which allowed three years to evaluate the response and the outcomes of this incentive.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Wintrow** asked why the limitation to 100 professionals per year was chosen. **Representative Wheeler** stated this was large enough to gather usable data, but small enough to keep the program manageable. **Senator Wintrow** asked for the definition of prior authorization and what the process looked like. **Representative Wheeler** provided an example of prior authorization and explained it was the process of asking an insurance provider if they would authorize a procedure. He stated the process was administratively burdensome, especially for the specialties named in this legislation.

TESTIMONY: **Fred Birnbaum**, Idaho Freedom Foundation, testified against **H 714**. He explained prior authorizations provided balance and protected tax payer dollars.

DISCUSSION: **Representative Wheeler** stated **H 788** would provide actionable data on how prior authorizations affected patient outcomes. He believed that prior authorizations seemed like a check on spending, but they often took decision making ability from physicians, which resulted in worse long-term outcomes. He stated the most important check was licensed medical professionals making decisions and recommendations for Idaho citizens.

Senator Wintrow asked whether care delayed by a prior authorization resulted in a worse outcome. **Representative Wheeler** stated research from medical associations showed more than 70 percent of cases resulted in worse long-term outcomes.

Acting Senator Bjerke (Bjerke) asked if providers were consulted when drafting this legislation. **Representative Wheeler** stated he had conversations with multiple stakeholders, including medical providers, insurance payers, and IDHW. The intent of the legislation was to allow providers more time to spend on clinicals or preceptorships with medical students.

Senator Zuiderveld stated this legislation would create many unknown outcomes, therefore she would not support it.

MOTION: **Senator Blaylock** moved to send **H 788** to the 14th Order of business for possible amendment. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senators Zuiderveld, Keyser, and Acting Senator Coho (Lenney)** requested to be recorded as voting nay.

H 724 **CHILD CARE LICENSING - Adds to existing law to provide for a notice of safety-related rights for foster children.** **Representative Josh Wheeler** explained this legislation established a foster child safety provision in Idaho law to articulate safety-related rights for children placed in foster care under the supervision of IDHW. **H 724** affirmed that children in foster care had rights to a safe and healthy placement environment, protection from abuse, timely medical assessments following abuse disclosures, access to basic necessities, court consideration of safety when determining visitation, and reasonable consideration of safety during placement transitions. This legislation also required IDHW to provide written notice of these rights to foster children and to post such notice in licensed foster homes, maintained existing court and departmental authority, provided direction for IDHW and the Judicial Branch on how to make decisions regarding children in foster care, and directed the court to consider safety when determining visitations.

TESTIMONY: **Kylie Billingsley, Monique Peyre**, foster parent, **Lyndsay Wright, Kevin Watson, Jeremy Rudolph**, foster parent, and **Amory Jay**, foster child, testified in support of **H724** and shared their personal experiences.

DISCUSSION: In closing, **Representative Wheeler** stated this legislation would help make more healthy reunifications a reality, ensure children were aware of their safety rights, and allow courts to consider the full history when making decisions for foster children.

Senator Wintrow stated it was good to see legislation addressing the findings of the Office of Performance Evaluations report that was conducted last year.

MOTION: **Senator Keyser** moved to send **H 724** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Shippy** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chair VanOrden** adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Senator VanOrden
Chair

Madyson Crea
Secretary