

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 19, 2026

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW20

MEMBERS: Chairman Vander Woude, Vice Chairman Erickson, Representatives Healey, Redman, Wheeler, Beiswenger, Burgoyne, Cayler, Fuhriman, Leavitt, McCann, Thompson, Hall (Stone), Tanner(13), Rubel, Egbert

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

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 Vander Woude called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

H 864: Continuation of the meeting of March 18, 2026.

Testifying **in support** of **H 864**: **Tia Rustici**, Self; **Tracy Basterrechea**, Idaho Chiefs of Police Association; **DeNae Jones**, Self; **Isaac Lopez**, Therapy Kratom; **Jeffrey Keller**, Self.

They shared stories regarding their struggles and family members who lost their lives due to the substance. Protecting citizens by eliminating easy access to kratom and its derivatives is important. The natural product gives a false sense it is a safe alternative. This legislation protects communities before they have to handle the consequences of this increasing use. Product potencies and ingredients vary. Kratom is present in prisons and juvenile detention facilities. This is a gateway drug being marketed to Idaho's youth.

Testifying **in opposition** to **H 864**: **Doug Ball**, Jackson Food Stores; **John Chavez**, Self; **Shawn Lepper**, Self; **Mason Mollette**, Self; **Curt Bramble**, American Kratom Association; **Lu Skein**, Self; **Robert Durkin**, Pharmacist, American Kratom Association.

In their testimonies the request for regulation or restrictions instead of a ban was prominent to allow consumer choice and use of the natural product for safe and responsible pain relief. The Federal Drug Association (FDA) has stated publicly their concern lies with the 7-OH synthetic products, not the whole or pure plant product. There is a need for restrictions such as age limit and labeling disclosures.

MOTION: **Rep. Egbert** made a motion to send **H 864** to the floor with no recommendation.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Rep. Beiswenger** made a substitute motion to Lay **H 864** on the Table.

AMENDED SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Rep. Rubel** made an amended substitute motion to **HOLD H 864** to time certain, March 25, 2026.

In closing, **Rep. Pohanka** and **Rep. Bingham** stated Idahoans taking the product are unaware of the long-term consequences and think it is safe. Those on the front line say it is causing fatal harm and is a growing epidemic. The Drug Enforcement Administration has identified it as a drug of concern. There have been 83 overdose deaths in Idaho since 2021 which included natural leaf kratom. This legislation provides a pause for study and public protection.

Committee discussion involved the inconsistencies with the treatment of this and other drugs and the need to assure it is used responsibly.

**ROLL CALL
VOTE ON
AMENDED
SUBSTITUTE
MOTION:**

Roll call vote was requested. Amended substitute motion **carried by a vote of 11 AYE and 5 NAY. Voting in support** of the motion: **Reps. Vander Woude, Healey, Redman, Burgoyne, Cayler, Fuhriman, Leavitt, Thompson, Stone, Tanner(13), Rubel. Voting in opposition** to the motion: **Reps. Erickson, Wheeler, Beiswenger, McCann, Egbert.**

H 903:

Rep. Jordan Redman, District 3, presented **H 903** which includes nutritional valued food in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

MOTION:

Rep. Beiswenger made a motion to send **H 903** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Pam Eaton, Idaho Retailers Association, testified **in support** of **H 903**, which addresses inconsistencies and consumer confusion.

**SUBSTITUTE
MOTION:**

Rep. McCann made a substitute motion to **HOLD H 903** to time certain, March 25, 2026. **Motion failed by voice vote.**

**VOTE ON
ORIGINAL
MOTION:**

Chairman Vander Woude called for a vote on the original motion to send **H 903** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Redman** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 757:

Rep. Lucas Cayler, District 11, presented **H 757** with further definitions and explicit exemptions for situations when children are removed from their homes based on medical negligence.

Answering questions **Rep. Cayler** stated this would apply to any parent jeopardizing the life of their child knowingly or unknowingly. This legislation affirms parental rights to make healthcare decisions while not discounting the liability for neglecting their children.

Kristine McCreery, Self, testified **in support** of **H 757**, sharing information on her son's removal from their home and the subsequent legal steps required to get him back.

Testifying **in opposition** to **H 757** were **Dr. Robert Crouch**, Family Medicine Physician; **Thomas Patterson**, President, Pediatrician, American Academy of Pediatrics; **Dr. Kylie Billingsley**, Child Psychologist; **Craig Petersen**, Senior Policy Coordinator, Voices for Children;

In their testimony they said irreversible damage occurs to children before life threatening conditions become evident. The broad caregiver exemptions and subjective standards are a concern. Narrowing the medical neglect definition is dangerous. This impacts foster children who are victims of neglect. Parental rights and protecting children already exists in law. Medical professionals do not take informing Child Protection Services lightly. Children should not reach a life threatening condition before Idaho can help them.

MOTION:

Rep. Leavitt made a motion to send **H 757** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

In closing, **Rep. Cayler** expressed dissatisfaction the supporters of **H 757** were not given sufficient time to testify after the legislation was carried over from the March 18, 2026, meeting. Mandatory reporting is still allowed. This assures reports are verifiable and affirms fundamental parental rights.

**SUBSTITUTE
MOTION:**

Rep. Healey made a substitute motion to **HOLD H 757** in committee.

Committee discussion included how serious conditions for children can become life threatening within minutes or slight hours. There is a lack of clarifying definitions.

**ROLL CALL
VOTE ON
SUBSTITUTE
MOTION:**

Roll call vote was requested. Substitute motion **carried by a vote of 9 AYE and 7 NAY. Voting in favor of the motion: Reps. Vander Woude, Erickson, Healey, Wheeler, Fuhriman, McCann, Stone, Rubel, Egbert. Voting in opposition to the motion: Reps. Redman, Beiswenger, Burgoyne, Cayler, Leavitt, Thompson, Tanner(13).**

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary