MINUTES
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 03, 2022
TIME: 9:00 A.M.
PLACE: Room EW40
MEMBERS: Chairman Crane, Vice Chairman Armstrong, Representatives Palmer, Barbieri, Holtzclaw, Monks, Scott, Andrus, Young, Furniss, Hanks, Skaug, Gannon, Mathias (Woodings)
ABSENT/EXCUSED: None
GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of the session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.
Chairman Crane called the meeting to order at 8:59 a.m.

MOTION: Rep. Young made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 21, 2022, meeting. Motion carried by voice vote.

HCR 40: Rep. Scott presented HCR 40 which ends the State of Emergency implemented by Governor Brad Little. Idaho has been in an emergency for 715 consecutive days. The emergency was put into effect when the uphill battle of the coronavirus began on March 15th, 2020. This legislation would urge the Governor to end the State of Emergency. As stated by Rep. Scott, the state of Idaho is no longer in an emergency and should follow the other states that have ended their state of emergency.

During committee discussion, Rep. Woodings asked what the outcome would be for the 600 federal healthcare workers if the State of Emergency ended. She referred to Idaho's current low vaccination rate and the high hospitalizations. Rep. Scott stated those positions would be filled by citizens from Idaho, and she also referred to $2 billion in surplus that the State of Idaho has available.

Del Chapel, Steven Keiser, Nina Beesley, Rachelle Ottosen, and Michael Lewis all testified in support of this legislation.

MOTION: Rep. Young made a motion to send HCR 40 to the floor with a DO PASS recommendation.


H 704: Rep. Dixon presented H 704 and RS 29699. H 704 is replaced by RS 29699 which both put into effect the requirement of any Non-Governmental Organization that assists in resettlement of refugees to the State of Idaho, that they report the name, age, sex, country of origin, and reason for resettlement to specific state agencies. There were previous concerns regarding what the definition of the term "refugee" is, and also the purpose for including "reason for resettlement" in the required report of information.

Del Chapel testified in support of the bill.
Georgette Siqueiros, the Development and Community Engagement Manager for the International Rescue Committee, testified in opposition of the bill. Ms. Siqueiros stated that if personal information were to be released, it could put a refugee at risk.

MOTION: Rep. Young made a motion to HOLD H 704 in committee. Motion carried by voice vote.

MOTION: Rep. Palmer made a motion to introduce RS 29699 and recommend it be sent directly to the second reading calendar.


H 666: Rep. DeMordaunt presented H 666 which prohibits the distribution of harmful materials to children. These specific materials include obscene depictions in movies, books, and other media. This bill would remove all of these harmful materials from school, libraries, universities, and museums. Rep. DeMordaunt stated that none of these materials should be used as a tool to teach human sexuality, and should never be included in schools or public libraries.

Stephanie Gifford and Blaine Conzatti both testified in support of the bill, and also provided information used in the introduction of the bill. Ms. Gifford stated the explicit material provided to the committee was found in the juvenile section of public libraries in Idaho.

Erin Kennedy and Huda Shaltry testified in opposition and stated the bill was written with vague verbiage, stating the bill saying "harmful materials" isn't specific enough, and there needs to be more description on whether it is regarding sexual material, pornographic materials, or materials with violence, or about guns, or even mental health conditions. There were comments on whether or not the legislation is about removing books from public libraries, or if it is to criminalize librarians who are giving these books out to children.

Nina Beesley, Kara Claridge, Craig Cobia, Michael Hon, Debbie Alis, and Rachelle Otteson all testified in support of H 666. The common factor was that it was a protection against harmful material for children, and there are harmful materials readily available to children in libraries and schools that shouldn't be.

Rep. DeMordaunt clarified that the claim this bill would criminalise librarians is false, and the goal is to not make the materials available to children.

MOTION: Rep. Young made a motion to send H 666 to the floor with a DO PASS recommendation.

Rep. Woodings mentioned Title 18 of Idaho Code, and stated this legislation does in fact criminalize librarians, and does not correct the problem that it is intending to correct.


ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.