

MINUTES
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & DEFENSE COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 20, 2024

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Palmer, Vice Chairman Mitchell, Representatives Dixon(1), Holtzclaw, Monks, Blanksma, Manwaring, Shepherd, Crane(12), Handy, Hill, Lanting, Miller, Petzke, Yamamoto, Gannon, Burns

**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 Palmer called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

MOTION: **Rep. Burns** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2024 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 547: **Rep. Berch**, District 15, stated current law exempts the fee for a specialty Purple Heart license plate to only those recipients of a Purple Heart who are disabled. This bill will extend that benefit to all Purple Heart recipients whether or not they are disabled. Rep. Berch yielded the podium to **Rep. Hill**.

Rep. Hill, District 14, indicated this is a much needed good will gesture to all Purple Heart recipients.

Colby Cameron, Governmental Affairs Manager, Idaho Transportation Department, stated there was an error in the figures he provided to **Rep. Berch** for the Fiscal Note and would like to make that correction for the record. Rather than a reduction to the License Plate Fund of \$80,000, he stated he failed to separate out the license plate fees from the registration fees, so the actual loss to the Fund would only be around \$7,000.

MOTION: **Rep. Shepherd** made a motion to send **H 547** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Reps. Berch and Hill** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Colonel Mike Alfaro, Commander, 366th Fighter Wing, Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB), presented the State of the Gunfighters address to the committee. The mission statement for the 366th Fighter Wing is to "provide mission-ready Gunfighters to conduct operations anytime, anywhere." Their vision is to be America's most elite Fighter Wing, focus on the fundamentals, intentionally aspirational, consistent with core values, and uniquely advantaged. He remarked the Gunfighters were certified in 2023 as Lead Wing by demonstrating capabilities in the Pacific and Southwest Asia, and indicated this is a very big accomplishment. The Mountain Home AFB was named Air Force finalist for the 2024 Commander-in-Chief Installation Excellence Award.

Col. Alfaro provided updates to several ongoing projects including the Snake River Water Pipeline project, stating they estimate completion in 2025. They are currently negotiating for the design/build for the water treatment plant portion of the project, with the award in March 2024 and completion no later than 2026. Additionally, they are working on a geothermal energy project and an airspace optimization project with the Federal Aviation Administration.

Col. Alfaro wrapped up his presentation with a summary of future missions/projects including; the AFB will become a combat support training range, being one of only twelve Air Force-wide; they are negotiating the beddown of twelve F15QA's with the Qatar Emiri Air Force; and they are preparing for the anticipated retirement of the older "220" F-15E engines, which will impact one 366th Fighter Wing squadron.

Chairman Palmer introduced **Alma Azocar Agurto**, the committee's new Page.

MOTION: **Rep. Mitchell** made a motion for the committee to dissolve into an executive session for the purpose of hearing an unclassified briefing given by intelligence experts from the Mountain Home AFB. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Major John Madsen and Technical Sergeant Casey Lehnertz, 366th Fighter Wing, Mountain Home AFB, presented an unclassified intelligence briefing to the committee.

MOTION: **Rep. Mitchell** made a motion to reconvene the public meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:29pm.

Representative Palmer
Chair

Tracey McDonnell
Secretary