

MINUTES  
**HOUSE COMMERCE & HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 03, 2021

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW05

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Holtzclaw, Vice Chairman Syme, Representatives Harris, Kingsley, Christensen, Giddings, Wisniewski, Horman, Hanks, von Ehlinger, Weber, Chew (Colwell), Necochea, Toone

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**GUESTS:** Jani Revier, Idaho Department of Labor (IDOL); Josh McKenna, IDOL; Amy Hohnstein, IDOL; Larry Ingram, IDOL; Craig Shaw, IDOL

**Chairman Holtzclaw** called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

**MOTION:** **Rep. von Ehlinger** made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2021 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Jani Revier**, Director, IDOL, gave a brief overview of the programs overseen by the Department. She explained how unemployment insurance works, describing how eligibility is determined, how claimants may file, and how claims are vetted and paid out. She also explained the appeals process in the case where a claim is wrongfully denied and gave a brief explanation of how the department disbursed federal CARES Act and later Continued Assistance Act benefits in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. She stated 75% of last year's Unemployment Insurance claims were paid from federal assistance while the rest were regular Unemployment Insurance claims. Additionally she explained the rise in fraudulent claims and what is being done to combat these claims. Next she gave some economic updates from 2020 stating unemployment spiked in early stages of the pandemic but rebounded quickly as the state reopened helped largely by the growth Idaho has been experiencing for the last several years. This allowed Idaho to be one of the least impacted states in the nation in terms of job loss and unemployment. She concluded her presentation by acknowledging service sectors of the job market are still declining and are currently projected to continue to be challenged by unemployment for the foreseeable future.

In response to Committee questions **Ms. Revier** stated while unemployment insurance benefits are taxable income and there is an option to have federal taxes withheld, but no similar option with state taxes. She also introduced **Larry Ingram**, IDOL, to address Committee concerns about unemployment fraud. Mr. Ingram explained the steps the departments takes in cases of fraud, beginning with an investigation and ending with garnishment of an individual if necessary. He noted any time money is found to have been paid out in error it is required to be returned. Upon seeing no further questions members of the Committee complimented Ms. Revier and the Department of Labor on their handling of unemployment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**DOCKET NO.  
09-0101-2001:** **Amy Hohnstein**, Appeals Bureau Chief, IDOL, stated the changes to **Docket No. 09-0101-2001** are fairly minor. The changes are meant to streamline the appeals process and ensure consistency. The rule change would allow appeals to be filed by e-mail, and extend the deadline to file appeals from 5 PM to Midnight which would allow appeals sent by e-mail more flexibility as people do tend to send e-mails late into the night.

- MOTION:** Vice Chairman Syme made a motion to approve **Docket No. 09-0101-2001**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- DOCKET NO. 09-0130-2002:** Josh McKenna, Unemployment Insurance Bureau Chief, IDOL, stated **Docket No. 09-0130-2002** is mostly wording changes applying to immigrant workers who are applying for Unemployment Insurance. The updated wording applies mainly to sections where outdated references to the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service have been replaced with the department's current title, the Department of Homeland security. In other sections "Idaho Works" has been replaced with "American Job Centers". He reiterated there are no changes to the substance of the rules, merely the wording.
- MOTION:** Rep. Harris made a motion to approve **Docket No. 09-0130-2002**. **Motion carried by voice vote.** Rep. Giddings requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**.
- DOCKET NO. 09-0160-2001:** Amy Hohnstein, Equal Employment Officer, IDOL, explained **Docket No. 09-0160-2001** is being repealed entirely as all the policies it enacts are already present in department rules and procedures making it redundant.
- MOTION:** Rep. Weber made a motion to approve **Docket No. 09-0160-2001**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- MOTION:** Rep. Toone made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2021 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 1:59 PM.

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Representative Holtzclaw  
Chair

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Emma Wall  
Secretary