

MINUTES
Approved by the Committee
Federalism Subcommittee on Health and Welfare
Monday, October 07, 2019
12:30 P.M.
EW41
Boise, Idaho

Co-chair Blanksma called the Federalism Subcommittee on Health and Welfare meeting to order at 12:33 p.m.; a silent roll call was taken.

Committee members in attendance: Co-chair Megan Blanksma and Co-chair Mark Harris; Senator Abby Lee; and Representative John Vander Woude. Senator David Nelson and Representative Laurie Lickley participated via conference-phone. Legislative Services Office (LSO) staff present: Kristin Ford, Elizabeth Bowen, and Ana Lara.

Other attendees: Norm Varin - Pacific Source Health Plans; Brody Aston - Westerberg Associates; and Liz Hatter - Veritas Advisors.

Opening Remarks

Co-chair Blanksma invited the committee members to share what direction they would like to see the committee take and what presentations they would be interested in seeing. Co-chair Harris stated his belief that the committee could be effective in making good changes in the area of Health and Welfare for the people of Idaho.

Subcommittee Organization

Co-chair Blanksma remarked that the co-chairs had discussed examining the positions in the Dept. of Health and Welfare (DHW) that are funded by both the federal and state governments. She added that they would also like to see a presentation on open positions at DHW to see how they are funded. She emphasized the need for transparency regarding state matching funds for federal funding and what purpose the funding is serving, especially when planning for state budgets and potential economic downturns.

Representative Vander Woude commented that DHW's budget is equal to what the state of Idaho collects in tax dollars. He noted that most of the department's budget consists of federal dollars, but questioned whether federal dollars and the state matching funds requirement are benefiting the people of the state of Idaho. He also suggested reviewing all the federal programs in the state and whether certain programs should continue.

Senator Lee suggested that budget information from the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC) could be beneficial to the committee to review and perhaps even a presentation on the matter might be beneficial as well. She encouraged the committee to review the restrictions/mandates that the federal program implements with its federal dollars. She noted that, while the federal government has set policy in many areas, she has found that the state has more discretion than they realized to adjust the policy for Idaho.

Senator Nelson noted that he represents the constituents in district five, who are both federal and state taxpayers, and would like to see whether his constituents' taxpayer dollars are all being returned or reinvested back into the state, or not, due to program design, etc. He stated that if Idaho's taxpayer dollars are not being reinvested in the state, then he would like to examine what program designs may be costing the state additional money.

Representative Lickley stated that many of her thoughts had already been covered in previous comments.

Co-chair Blanksma noted that many of the committee members are also members of other committees that review federal programs and state matching dollars and understand some of the issues with using federal funds. She echoed Senator Rice's comments in another committee meeting, stating that the government does not have dollars; the government, both federal and state, is funded by taxpayer dollars. She referenced Senator Lee's suggestion to have someone present on JFAC's budget for DHW at the next meeting.

Co-chair Harris expressed gratitude to the committee members for serving on the committee and to LSO staff. Co-chair Blanksma noted that LSO would assist in scheduling the next committee meeting dependent on when a presentation on DHW's budget could be arranged.

The committee meeting adjourned at 12:44 p.m.