

## **RECONVENED**

08:33:10 Sen. Small called the State Tribal Relations Committee to order and reviewed the day's agenda.

## **HJ 10 study of barriers to American Indian voting in Montana**

08:33:47 Ms. Stockwell introduced the panel discussion regarding a postmortem on the mail ballot primary in Indian Country.

### County election administrator perspectives

08:35:15 Dulcie Bear Don't Walk, Election Administrator, Big Horn Country

08:39:23 Tammy Williams, Election Administrator, Blaine County

08:41:31 Joan Duffield, Election Administrator, Rosebud County (**Exhibit**

08:43:39 **14**) Katie Harding, Election Administrator, Lake County

### Stakeholder perspectives

08:46:47 Ta'jin Perez, Western Native Voice

08:52:37 Michaelynn Hawk, Indian People's Action - handout (**Exhibit 15**)

### Questions and discussion from the committee

08:59:51 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked Ms. Hawk if she could clarify the overall results in terms of the ballot return versus the registered voters. Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked the county election administrators how many new voter registrations came in during this time, and if they didn't currently have the information, they could send that later.

09:12:38 Rep. Peppers asked the election administrators if the Ballot Interference Protection Act hindered or influenced people trying to get their ballots in.

09:14:17 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked all the election administrators to get new voter registration data to the committee and discussed concerns about ballots with incorrect addresses not being delivered. Rep. Stewart Peregoy suggested the Secretary of State and the county election administrators remind voters to check their addresses for accuracy.

09:22:09 Sen. Salomon stated a lot of local elections had been mail in ballots for years and the issues were being addressed for upcoming elections.

08:23:54 Commissioner Delores Plumage from Blaine County suggested ongoing discussions between stakeholders and counties.

09:27:05 Rep. Peppers asked about households without correct addresses and how delivery of the mail ballots will be resolved.

09:31:15 Sen. Smith stated Western Native Voice was correct and the issue of returned ballots needed to be addressed and fixed for future elections.

### Public comment

09:32:00 Commissioner Plumage, Lake County

09:37:11 Ms. Bear Don't Walk, Big Horn County

09:40:15 John Old Elk, Montana Native Vote

### STRC action

09:44:01 Sen. Small suggested sending a letter to be drafted by Ms. Stockwell to the Secretary of State and the county election administrators reminding people to update their addresses before the general election in the fall.

- 09:44:43 Rep. Stewart Peregoy stated there needed to be a concentrated effort of communities working together to inform the public and constituents regarding the upcoming election and to do their due diligence regarding correct addresses.
- 09:47:22 Sen. Small further discussed the draft letter.
- 09:48:14 Ms. Stockwell stated she could write a draft letter to be reviewed at the next meeting.

#### **Study of improving communication between the state and tribes in child neglect cases**

- 09:49:56 Brooke Baracker-Taylor, Assistant Attorney General, gave a presentation regarding the Court Improvement Project training for qualified expert witnesses.
- 09:59:24 Marti Vining, CFSD Administrator, DPHHS began her review of the CFSD updates and data review. Ms. Vining reviewed the April 2020 caseload handout ([Exhibit 16](#)) and gave comparisons of reports and substantiations for March/April of 2019 and 2020 handout ([Exhibit 17](#)).

#### **Public comment**

- 10:19:34 none

#### **Questions and discussion from the committee**

- 10:20:13 Rep. Peppers asked Ms. Vining about the statistics on kids entering and exiting the system and whether she thought COVID impacted those numbers. Rep. Peppers asked Ms. Vining if the committee could get a copy of the training for supervisory staff.

#### **Public comment**

- 10:23:22 none

#### **STRC action**

- 10:23:33 none

#### **BREAK (reconvened at 10:39:13)**

- 10:24:01

#### **Follow up on potential legislative proposals - continued**

- 10:39:21 Ms. Stockwell began her overview of the missing persons bill drafts starting with PD 0008 - establishing a missing persons review commissio . ([Exhibit 18](#))
- 10:43:41 Melissa Schlichting, Montana Department of Justice (DOJ), provided additional information on the draft.

#### **Questions and discussion from the committee**

- 10:45:52 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked what the cost for the 18-member commission would be. Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked if it would be a new appropriation or could be absorbed by the DOJ. Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked Ms. Schlichting if they couldn't go with the 18-member commission could they look at a 9-member commission.
- 10:49:48 Sen. Salomon asked Ms. Schlichting if her department could add that into the governor's budget brought forth on November 15th or would it stand alone.
- 10:51:43 Sen. Small asked the committee if the department could bring this bill draft back to the next meeting to see if they could cut the cost.
- 10:52:10 Rep. Stewart Peregoy agreed with Sen. Small.

10:52:22 Sen. Small asked Ms. Schlichting if she could consider Sen. Salomon's suggestion and get back to the committee.

STRC action

10:52:48 none

**Follow up on potential legislative proposals - continued**

10:52:52 Ms. Stockwell began her overview of bill draft PD 0010 - establishing a missing persons response team training grant program. **(Exhibit 19)**

10:57:23 Tina Chamberlain, Looping in Native Communities coordinator (LINC), Department of Justice provided budget information for the draft.

Questions and discussion from the committee

10:59:21 Rep. Stewart Perego stated any new money will have to be justified and asked about the \$61,000 appropriation and if that was allotted for regional training. Rep. Stewart Perego suggested there could be opportunities for cost sharing.

11:01:12 Sen. Salomon agreed with Rep. Stewart Perego's statements regarding the benefit of having those funds lumped together with another group.

STRC action

11:03:03 Sen. Small stated there needed to be more work on the bill draft regarding the budget, and that the bill could be looked at again during the next meeting.

**Follow up on potential legislative proposals - continued**

11:03:29 Ms. Stockwell began her overview of bill draft PD 0011 - extending the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Forc. **(Exhibit 20)**

11:05:38 Ms. Stockwell began her overview of bill draft PD 0012 - extending the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force and the Looping in Native Communities grant program. **(Exhibit 21)**

11:07:42 Ms. Chamberlain provided budget information for the drafts.

Questions and discussion from the committee

11:09:10 Rep. Stewart Perego asked if these funds would be new.

STRC action

11:09:42 Sen. Small suggested the DOJ revisit the bills to see if they could adjust funds, and then bring the bills to the upcoming meeting for review.

11:10:31 Ms. Stockwell asked for a point of clarification regarding moving both bill drafts forward to keep both options available for the next meeting.

11:10:53 Sen. Salomon suggested moving both forward, using bill draft PD 0012 as the preferred and bill draft PD 0011 as the backup.

11:11:04 Sen. Small agreed.

11:11:12 Rep. Stewart Perego agreed.

Public comment

11:13:34 none

STRC action, if any

11:13:50 none

Public comment on any matter under the jurisdiction of the STRC but not on the agenda

11:14:02 none

**Draft letter to USDA in support of livestock producers use of small processing facilities**

11:15:18 Ms. Stockwell began her review of the draft letter to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue regarding small meat processing facilities. ([Exhibit 22](#))  
11:18:43 Mike Honeycutt, Department of Livestock Executive Director gave some background on the concerns raised during the pandemic.

**Questions and discussion from the committee**

11:24:19 Sen. Small asked Mr. Honeycutt if there was anything he would like to see added. Sen. Small asked if the committee were to add the second section and to throw a trigger mechanism in for an interstate market request would Mr. Honeycutt feel there would be a problem with that.  
11:30:25 Rep. Knudsen stated he was not in support of waiting for a trigger mechanism.  
11:32:09 Sen. Salomon asked Mr. Honeycutt if part of the issue was a turf war.  
11:34:05 Sen. Small stated he had no problem with adding support through the federal legislation that's out there and for the ability to sell across state lines and suggested Mr. Honeycutt draft a letter to be reviewed at the upcoming meeting.

**STRC action**

11:36:08 Rep. Peppers stated she would like to see the letter get out to get action for producers and processors.  
11:37:21 Rep. Knudsen stated he agreed a letter needed to get out immediately.  
11:37:53 Sen. Smith stated a letter needed to be sent as soon as possible.  
11:38:35 Sen. Small stated he would like to get the letter out initially and come back with a letter with more research supporting federal legislation.  
11:38:55 Rep. Read stated he supported the letter and asked Mr. Honeycutt if it was regulation or actual federal law that was being fought.

**Public comment**

11:43:28 none

**Motion**

11:43:39 Sen. Small made a motion to send an immediate letter regarding livestock producers use of small processing facilities.

**Vote**

11:43:46 Motion to send an immediate letter passed unanimously.

**Continued discussion of potential legislative proposals - continued**

11:45:06 Sen. Small asked if there was legislation to be reviewed from yesterday. Ms. Stockwell stated the committee already gave instruction to move the two bill drafts related to runaway youth forward with the changes proposed. Ms. Stockwell reviewed an additional draft requested yesterday to clarify that minors may not easily disaffirm contracts for housing.

**Questions and discussion from the committee**

11:47:13 Sen. Salomon stated the draft was straight forward.  
11:47:23 Rep. Stewart Peregoy stated the draft was fine.  
11:48:32 The committee agreed to move the draft forward for a 30-day public comment along with the other legislative proposals previously discussed.

11:48:10 Ms. Stockwell stated for the next meeting she would be working on draft reports for each of the 4 studies included in the work plan and would do a draft report outlining discussion on the missing persons legislation.

**ADJOURN**

11:50:56 Sen. Small adjourned the State Tribal Relations Committee meeting at 11:51am.