



MINUTES

International Relations Committee of the Legislative Council

February 26, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Daryl Beall, Chairperson
Senator Nancy J. Boettger
Senator Gene Fraise

Representative McKinley Bailey,
Vice Chairperson
Representative Richard Anderson
Representative Swati Dandekar
Representative Libby Jacobs
Representative Helen Miller
Representative Rod Roberts

MEETING IN BRIEF

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I. Procedural Business

II. Discussion



International Relations Committee of the Legislative Council

I. Procedural Business

Call to Order. Chairperson Beall called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m. on February 26, 2008, in Room 22 of the Statehouse. The meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

Minutes Approved. The Committee members approved the minutes from the meeting on February 21, 2007, by a unanimous voice vote.

Next Meeting. Chairperson Beall indicated that the Committee would next meet in March 2008.

II. Discussion

A. Budgets

The Committee discussed the budget for gifts that members may purchase to take on official trips and the budget available for hosting international visitors at the Statehouse.

Legislative Services Agency Director Dennis Prouty was asked to explain the budgets to the Committee. Mr. Prouty told the Committee that every two years, corresponding with the sessions of the General Assembly, two budgets are assigned for the International Relations Committee. The first budget, which was set at \$10,000, is for members to purchase gifts through the Legislative Information Office to take on trips when the members are traveling as legislators in an official capacity. Mr. Prouty estimated that \$9,000 remains available. The second budget, also set at \$10,000, is for members to use to host international visitors at the Statehouse for gifts, receptions, dinners, or other similar uses. Mr. Prouty estimated that nearly all of the budget remains available.

Mr. Prouty explained that the procedure for accessing the funds for buying gifts to take on a trip is for a member to fill out a form that must be approved by the Committee chairpersons. Mr. Prouty noted that for certain gifts that require engraving or other special details, advance notice is required.

In order to access funds when hosting an international visitor, a form must also be filled out, be approved by the Committee chairpersons, and House and Senate leadership must be consulted.

B. Protocol

The Committee discussed the proper protocol for treating visiting delegations presented to the chambers. Chairperson Beall and Senator Boettger noted that an official protocol has been adopted and suggested that both chambers be addressed about how to behave when a foreign dignitary is being introduced.

C. Turkey Delegation

The Committee discussed a possible delegation visiting Turkey in the summer of 2008. Representative Roberts suggested that the Committee could assist people from the Iowa Resource Center who are trying to organize the trip to Turkey with facilitating the trip to avoid any conflict with gift or ethics rules. The Committee discussed the possibility of whether the moneys budgeted for conferences and continued education programs for each member could be used by individual members for travel costs associated with official invitations to travel abroad as



legislators. Mr. Prouty was consulted and he suggested that it is possible and that some education would need to be done.

Two volunteers from the Iowa Dialog Center addressed the Committee about a possible group of legislators visiting Turkey in summer 2008. The volunteers were Mr. Mehmet Caputcu from Turkey and Mr. Alimjan Akayev from Kazakhstan.

Mr. Caputcu told the Committee that the Iowa Dialog Center tries to provide a neutral platform for people of all cultural and faith backgrounds in Iowa. The center provides activities that help people interact with each other to promote mutual understanding.

Mr. Caputcu said that Turkey has been hosting legislators from other states and that a typical trip is about eight days. Legislators are responsible for their own transportation to and from Turkey, but all transportation, accommodations, and meals are hosted by Turkey during the trip. The Committee discussed a time to take the trip and decided that between July and September would be best for legislators and Turkey. The trip would include a visit with government officials who have responsibilities similar to the legislators' responsibilities, religious sites, museums, and a university. The trip will be tailored to the needs and requests of the legislators attending.

D. Community Connections

The Committee discussed groups with which to connect or from whom the Committee would like to hear. Suggestions included the Iowa Council for International Understanding, Drake University, Iowa State University, Des Moines Area Community College, and businesses in Iowa with international connections.

E. United States Center for Citizen Diplomacy

Mr. Brice Oakley addressed the Committee about the status of the United States Center for Citizen Diplomacy, which is located in Des Moines. Mr. Oakley stated that the board of directors had suspended fundraising lobbying until mid-March until the center knew whether the Legislature is going to provide some financial encouragement to continue its work and continue it from Iowa.

Mr. Oakley stated that the center seeks a partnership with federal and some state funding assistance as well as private funding. Mr. Oakley said the center is an economic development investment for Iowa. The center has already been receiving recognition and awards for its work in Washington, D.C., and has been receiving requests from international volunteer organizations to provide services. Mr. Oakley said that an appropriation of funds from the state would indicate that the state sees the center as an important tool for Iowa and wants to be a partner in its future.

F. Upcoming Events with International Visitors

The Committee mentioned the following events with international visitors at the Statehouse. No other information was available:

- Foreign dignitaries from Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Ghana, and Jamaica, March 6
- Irish Parliamentarian Mr. David Stanton, March 11
- Nigerian women leaders in March