



# **MINUTES**

## **International Relations Committee**

**Monday, February 25, 2019**

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### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Zach Nunn, Chair  
Senator Tim L. Kapucian  
Senator Kevin Kinney

Representative Karin Derry  
Representative Brian K. Lohse  
Representative Heather Matson

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### I. Procedural Business

**Background and Charge.** The International Relations Committee was created by the Legislative Council in 1992. The committee's charge is as follows: Develop goals and procedures that will facilitate international communication between the Iowa General Assembly and foreign governments on several different levels, including but not limited to interpersonal interaction between state legislators and legislative staff and foreign visitors, instruction about state and local democratic institutions, and the development of trade in foreign markets.

**Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Nunn at 11:05 a.m., Monday, February 25, 2019, in Room 22 of the State Capitol Building in Des Moines.

**Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the February 11, 2019, meeting were approved as published.

**Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

### II. Joint Intelligence Briefing and Presentation Regarding Kosovo Sister State

Ms. Heather Jones, Executive Director, Iowa Sister States (ISS); LTC Jeff Erickson, Director, State Partnership Program, Iowa National Guard; and Mr. Xhavit Gashi, Consul General, Consulate of the Republic of Kosovo, provided committee members with an overview, history, and descriptions of the current activities relating to Iowa's partnership with the Republic of Kosovo.

Ms. Jones described upcoming ISS events. Chairperson Nunn observed members should consider participating in at least two of the events -- the April 2019 Citizen Diplomacy Summit, which needs volunteers for the steering committee, and the May 2019 delegation to Kosovo that ISS is organizing. Chairperson Nunn noted members can, based on an advisory opinion issued in 2018 by the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board, use campaign funds for travel as members of such a delegation. (See the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board Advisory Opinion IECDB AO 2018-01, issued on January 25, 2018, in which the board states: *We are of the opinion this trip to Kosovo would be educational and related to your duties of office. However, "meal expenses are not allowable as expenses associated with the duties of office under any circumstances." Thus, you may use campaign funds to pay for your travel and lodging for this trip but not your meals.*)

LTC Erickson observed that the State Partnership Program, "The Whole of Iowa for the Whole of Kosovo," markets Iowa and looks to ISS for assistance in providing an Iowa face to the partnership. He noted that locating the Republic of Kosovo Consulate in Des Moines, Iowa, was a great accomplishment.

Consul General Gashi thanked the people of Iowa for providing invaluable assistance through the sister city and sister state partnerships; the participation of the Iowa National Guard on a wide range of security cooperation activities; collaborations with business, industry, and trade groups and organizations such as the Greater Des Moines Partnership; colleges and universities such as Des Moines Area Community College, Drake University, and the three state universities; exchange programs with the World Food Prize and Global Youth Institute; and Iowa agriculture business and commodity groups. He identified four sister city partnerships, noted two more would be announced soon, with more Iowa cities indicating interest in establishing sister cities with cities in Kosovo.

Senator Kinney and Consul General Gashi exchanged gifts on behalf of Iowa and the Republic of Kosovo.



### **III. Discussion**

Chairperson Nunn distributed a draft of a Senate resolution in support of strengthening and deepening the relationship between Taiwan and the State of Iowa. He asked members to review the resolution, which the committee will vote on at the next committee meeting. He told members he would like the committee to vet resolutions of international importance prior to consideration by the General Assembly.

### **IV. Materials Filed with the Legislative Services Agency**

Materials distributed at or in connection with the meeting are filed with the Legislative Services Agency and may be accessed from the "Committee Documents" link on the committee's Internet site at: [www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/meetings/documents?committee=661&ga=ALL](http://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/meetings/documents?committee=661&ga=ALL)

1. [Iowa Sister States Information Card.](#)
2. [Kosovo - Joint Presentation PowerPoint.](#)