



MINUTES

International Relations Committee

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Annette Sweeney, Vice Chairperson
Senator William A. Dotzler Jr.
Senator Janice Weiner

Representative Eddie Andrews, Chairperson
Representative Ken Croken
Representative Jon Dunwell
Representative Thomas Gerhold
Representative Helena Hayes
Representative Barb Kniff McCulla
Representative Elinor A. Levin
Representative Mary Lee Madison
Representative Mark I. Thompson

LSA CONTACTS: Organizational staffing and minutes provided by: Joseph McEniry, Division Administrator, Legal Services Division, Legislative Services Agency, 515.281.3566

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I. Procedural Business

Call to Order and Adjournment. The meeting of the International Relations Committee was called to order by Chairperson Andrews at 11:30 a.m., February 19, 2025, in Room 102 of the State Capitol, Des Moines. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Adoption of Rules. The committee adopted the committee rules.

Approval of Minutes. The committee approved the minutes from the previous meeting held on January 16, 2025.

II. Presentation By Lutheran Services of Iowa

Ms. Renee Hardman, Executor Director, Lutheran Services of Iowa, presented about the history of Lutheran Services of Iowa (LSI), and provided an update about LSI's work with legal refugees around the state. She stated LSI's work with legal refugees has stopped due to the current pause put in place by the federal government. She emphasized how valuable refugees have been to the State of Iowa, and introduced three current refugees who have obtained their citizenship, and provided their histories to the committee. Mr. Nick Wuertz, Director, LSI, spoke about the current funding issues with the federal government. He also spoke about continuing efforts to raise private donations to fill in some funding gaps. Committee discussion ensued about the value of legal refugees to the State of Iowa, and ongoing needs to protect the border from illegal immigration.