

**TESTIMONY FOR TRUSTEE ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER  
SB1307**

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee. For the record, I am Karen Echeverria, Executive Director of the Idaho School Boards Association. I'm here today representing school districts and the Board members who govern them. I do want to note that this bill will not impact charter school boards and I am, therefore, not speaking on their behalf today.

We do stand in opposition to this bill.

Trustees in the 115 school districts in Idaho are completely volunteer. They receive no compensation for the time they spend supporting the students in their districts and the communities they live in.

All over the United States and in Idaho, there are boards, committees, councils, and commissions. These folks are known as board members, commissioners, council men or women. Only school board and community college members are called trustees. Section 33-501, Idaho Code states, "Each school district shall be governed by a Board of trustees..." A trustee is the highest standard of duty implied in the law. A trustee owes a fiduciary duty to its beneficiaries. The definition of a fiduciary duty is to act for someone else's benefit, while subordinating your personal interest to that of another person.

Elected trustees are one of the few elected positions in Idaho that remain truly nonpartisan and still hold the highest standard of duty. And, we would like to keep it that way. The work that trustees do must ultimately be about what is best for the students in their local districts and communities and not about partisan politics.

If trustee elections are moved to November of even years, they will be on a ballot with all other statewide elections and, in some years, the Presidential election. Because of the importance of those elections, trustee elections will become a second thought – something that most voters will not pay attention too. The voters will be focused on legislative and presidential elections as they should be and will likely not be informed about candidates for their local school board.

We know that the intent of election consolidation was to get more voters to turn out for elections. We also know that has not occurred in some of our trustee

elections. As such, we would be willing to work with Senator Rice and Representative Chaney to see if they would be willing to amend the bill to move the election dates to November of odd years. City council and mayoral elections are held on that date. City council and mayoral elections are also nonpartisan as are trustees. We think trustee elections would be a better fit on the ballot in odd years.

We believe that would increase voter turnout at trustee elections but still keep them on that nonpartisan ballot.

For these reasons, we oppose SB1307 and would ask that you hold it in committee or send it to the amending order with the intent that the election date be moved to November of odd years so that trustee elections would remain on a nonpartisan ballot.

Thank you Mr. Chair and members of the committee. I appreciate your time today and we would be glad to stand for any questions.