

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 05, 2024

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Toews, Senators Den Hartog, Nichols, Carlson, Herndon, Lenney, Ward-Engelking, and Semmelroth

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies, and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Lent** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:06 p.m.

PRESENTATION: **iDeal Idaho College Savings Program. Marilyn Whitney**, Executive Director, iDeal Idaho College Savings Program, presented about the program and gave a 2023 update (Attachment 1). She shared that the mission of the program was to help Idaho families pursue education through tax-advantaged savings. She presented program highlights from 2023 which included an increase in new accounts and in total program assets. She explained the benefits of 529 Savings Plans and reviewed investment options for all savers, which included individuals and employers.

RS 30888C2 **Relating to Proposing an Amendment to Section 9, Article IX of the Constitution of Idaho, Relating to School Attendance. Senator Herndon** provided a historical overview of Article IX, Section 9 of the Idaho State Constitution and the number of times and reasons it was amended. He reviewed the development of Idaho Code related to the rights of parents and guardians to privately home school or privately educate their children. He explained that **RS 30888C2** added wording to Article IX, Section 9 of the Idaho State Constitution to affirm what exists in Idaho Code, that custodial parents and guardians of any minor child in Idaho shall have the fundamental right to privately home educate such child, or to cause such child to be privately educated. Furthermore, the amendment stated that those who privately home educate or caused their children to be privately educated shall be free from government regulation of such education.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** voiced concern about public monies potentially funding home school or private school options. **Senator Herndon** clarified that **RS 30888C2** does not address public funding.

MOTION: **Senator Lenney** moved that **RS 30888C2** be sent to print. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senator Ward-Engelking** requested that she be recorded as voting nay.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 3:34 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Lisa Stein
Secretary