

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 15, 2016

**TIME:** 2:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, Anthon and Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Buckner-Webb

**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 Mortimer** called the Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.

**INTERN FAREWELL:** **Jordan Richeson**, Senator Mortimer's intern from Boise State University, explained that she helped with the research for the budget stabilization fund and rural school funding. **Ms. Richeson** hopes to graduate and attend law school.

**H 477** **Representative Kerby** presented **H 477**: Relating to Advanced Opportunities. He explained this is a postsecondary scholarship bill. It give students a college scholarship if they have earned college credits while in high school. He explained the issue of students not going on to college and reported the low percentages of attendance. **Representative Kerby** outlined the criteria and requirements to be eligible to for the scholarship. The credits that the students earn must be recognized by the university or college that they wish to attend. Students must also graduate from high school before they're eligible. He said the program is funded through the Advanced Opportunities Program. He detailed the possible costs for the program. **Representative Kerby** hoped that parents would help their students aim to get college credit to receive the scholarship.

**Senator Souza** asked what a postsecondary merit scholarship means. **Representative Kerby** gave an example: a student would need a merit scholarship of a \$1,000 dollars to receive the matched scholarship of \$1,000 that **H 477** would create. **Senator Souza** clarified that the first \$1,000 dollars would come from the post secondary school that the student was applying to. **Representative Kerby** answered that students could receive a scholarship from a school, business, foundation or any source. **Senator Souza** inquired about financial involvement of industry. **Representative Kerby** said that industries can create scholarships to support specific programs or students. He mentioned that this process could take several years to establish. **Senator Souza** inquired if businesses like Micron could become involved. **Representative Kerby** confirmed that was correct.

**Senator Athon** asked which institutions are eligible to participate. **Representative Kerby** answered that schools that are accredited and recognized by the State Board of Education (SBE) may participate.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked for more clarification in regards to merit-based scholarships. **Representative Kerby** said that businesses can offer scholarships to motivate students to pursue specific careers. **Senator Den Hartog** inquired about a student who earns an associates degree in high school and receives full funding for the first two years of college; would students need the matching funding? **Representative Kerby** answered that in that case, a student could use the money for room and board.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if the term "merit based" was further defined elsewhere. **Tracie Bent**, Chief Policy Officer SBE, said that it is not defined in Idaho Code, but it could be specified in Administrative Rule. **Chairman Mortimer** asked if Ms. Bent could define it. **Ms. Bent** said that it is any scholarship that is based on grades or tests or GPA, anything that is academic merit. **Chairman Mortimer** asked about foundations and associations that give scholarships based on participation or other requirements not associated with merit. **Ms. Bent** said that any scholarship where merit was the major reason it was awarded would count towards the new program.

**Vice Chairman Thayne** asked for clarification about opportunity-based scholarships. **Ms. Bent** said that opportunity-based scholarships that do not qualify as a matching component.

**Senator Den Hartog** inquired how this program is different from the opportunity scholarship. **Ms. Bent** said this would target a potentially different group of students, although there could be overlap. **Senator Den Hartog** asked about timing, as students might apply for multiple scholarships. **Ms. Bent** replied that there are processes in place to ensure that students have time to apply for other scholarships.

**Senator Athon** asked if the program has been funded by the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC). **Ms. Bent** said that there have been \$6 million dollars allocated for the Advanced Opportunities Program, and this scholarship would draw from that money if it's approved. **Chairman Mortimer** inquired if there has been a priority established with the programs and funding. **Ms. Bent** answered that they would not have one program funded and not another.

**Senator Souza** mentioned she saw an issue with the difference in tuition for public and private institutions. **Vice Chairman Thayne** appreciated that she had mentioned the issue because he and Representative Kerby had realized the bill needed adjustment. They will change the wording to note the average cost of public universities in Idaho.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked what would happen if all of the money was used up and none was left for this scholarship; where would funds come from? **Vice Chairman Thayne** said it would be funded out of the Public Education Stabilization Fund. He also stated that the bill has put a cap of \$1 million on the first year and \$2 million thereafter.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if there are other merit-based scholarships in Idaho. **Ms. Bent** said there are no statewide merit-based scholarships from the SBE. **Chairman Mortimer** inquired what the majority of funds would be spent on. **Representative Kerby** said they didn't want the funds to be completely constrictive; it should be spent on what the student needs.

**Senator Souza** asked if a student would still receive a full match of scholarship funds if their tuition was covered by another scholarship. **Representative Kerby** repeated that they had included the flexibility with respect to where funding can go to because room and board is often expensive. **Senator Souza** clarified that the State may not pay the full amount of the scholarship if the student doesn't need it. **Representative Kerby** said that was correct.

**Senator Anthon** asked if tuition was high, the scholarship combined with a match may not cover all of the expenses. **Representative Kerby** agreed that was true.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Bert Glandon**, President of the College of Western Idaho, spoke in support of **H 477**. **Mr. Glandon** said this is an opportunity for more business and industry to get involved. He stated that this would positively effect how foundations could draw in participation in higher education. **Mr. Glandon** explained the foundation has scholarships to help grow business and industry relationships to increase the volume of skilled labor.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** inquired how specifically this will help relationships between students and industry. **Mr. Glandon** used the example of the Diesel Technician Program with Western States CAT; the group was interested in being more involved with the recruitment and placement of students. **Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if the bill should be written to only use industry money coming in, or should it use foundation money as well. **Mr. Glandon** replied that the motivator is that the industry money will be matched. **Vice Chairman Thayn** clarified that Mr. Glandon would rather use industry money. **Mr. Glandon** answered that the greater the involvement, the greater the commitment. He said the when a company invests money in students, they are more likely to hire those students later.

**Jason Ronk**, State Government Affairs Director for Micron Technology, spoke in favor of the bill. **Mr. Ronk** stated that education is important to Micron. Micron wants to ensure a pipeline of talent for the current and future workforce. He said merit based scholarships help set standards for the jobs needed.

**Jay Larsen**, Idaho Tech Council (ITC), came before the Committee in support of **H 477**. **Mr. Larsen** stated that ITC represents about 80,000 employees from various technology companies across Idaho, and they are interested in ways that industry can be stronger and more significant. He said that **H 477** helps students go on to postsecondary education.

**Representative Kerby** stated that Idaho needs children to go to college and stay in the State. He doesn't want smart students to leave Idaho, and this bill is an attempt to help keep them. He mentioned that he's frustrated because some schools aren't offering classes that give students advanced credit, so they'd be unable to be eligible for the scholarship. **Vice Chairman Thayn** added that the bill has merit and will increase discussion in enlarging class offerings.

**MOTION:**

**Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to send **H 477** to the 14th Order for amendment. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Vice Chairman Thayn will carry **H 477** to the floor.

**PRESENTATION:**

**Sherri Ybarra**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education, introduced the Beasts from Vision Charter School and the first place winners of the STEM Robotics Challenge. **Superintendent Ybarra** said they are evidence that Idaho's schools can prepare their students STEM courses. She added that the students will have earned an associates degree before they graduate in the spring.

**Patrick Miller** explained that they are in a group called FIRST, which stands for For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology. He said their team has devoted more than 1,000 hours to volunteering on behalf of STEM in Idaho.

**Paul Rebbie** said the group is an inspiration because they are gracious competitors and a role-model team. He elaborated that the team is able to communicate their experiences and their passions and knowledge to other teams, to the community, the sponsors and the judges.

**Hannah Samuelson**, Project Manager, said that FIRST is a great opportunity because it allows the students to take what they've learned in school and apply it to the real world.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m.

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Chairman Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary

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Anna Roser  
Assistant