

Testimony on SB1070 – Alternate Graduation Route

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. I'm Karen Echeverria, Executive Director of the Idaho school Boards Association and I'm here today testifying on behalf of my association as well as the Idaho Education Association and the Idaho Association of School Administrators.

1. Current federal law—and Idaho's agreement to follow that law, as outlined in our ESEA waiver that was signed and approved by the US DOE several years ago—requires that at least 95% of all students are assessed. We are concerned that this piece of legislation could violate the waiver and cause Idaho to lose federal funding.
2. The bill includes an emergency clause, which makes the bill enforceable law upon the governor's signature. That would mean that the law would go into effect for this school year. We have several concerns with this. First, we are not clear whether allowing students to opt out and take an alternate assessment this year would violate the current ESEA waiver. Second, the State Board of Education informed us this morning that there are still districts that don't have an alternate assessment in place, and if they do we are also not clear whether that assessment is up-to-date based on the updated Idaho Core Standards.
3. Our main concern is ensuring that every student has a fair opportunity to graduate. We want to be sure that neither this piece of legislation nor any ramifications that might arise at an individual school district as a result of this

legislation would result in a student being denied the right to graduate.

We would ask this committee take our concerns into consideration before acting on this bill. With that, Mr. Chair, I am glad to stand for any questions and I'm sure Robin and Rob will assist me as well.