

Good afternoon, Chairman Mortimer and members of the committee, I am Penni Cyr, President of the Idaho Education Association. I am here today to stand in opposition to SB 1071.

On behalf of the members of the IEA, we are opposed to this measure for one very important reason. As I stated in our testimony yesterday on SCR 106, the IEA is and has always been opposed to the use of high-stakes testing.

I want to be very clear. IEA members emphatically believe in the importance of preparing our students for college or the workplace. It is equally important that we create well-educated citizens who will continue to build on the foundation of our democratic way of life. In order to ensure the future of our republic, it is imperative that students understand the rights and responsibilities we all have to each other as members of society.

We believe that it is important to teach US History and civics and every other course that our state deems important for a high school graduate to study. What we do not support is a requirement that every high school student be able to pass a US citizenship test in order to graduate from high school.

At some point we need to take a step back and recognize that the exponential growth of high-stakes tests in our schools is having a detrimental impact on the quantity, as well as quality, of the instruction that our students are receiving. By definition, a high-stakes test is any test that is a single, defined assessment, has a clear line drawn between those who pass and those who fail, and has direct consequences for passing or failing (something is "at stake").

High-stakes testing has become the norm in schools since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Idaho, like many other states, requires that

students pass a standardized test in order to graduate. And you are currently being asked to consider approving a State Board rule (08.0203.1405) that will continue that requirement for the SBAC test. When a test becomes a high-stakes test, preparing for it can take away from the subject areas that are not tested, including those that foster creativity. High-stakes tests cause any subject that isn't tested to be pushed out or set aside.

In Idaho, we know that with the advent of the ISAT and the need for students to successfully complete it, subjects like music, art, and physical education were sacrificed to make time for more test prep. When other subjects are abandoned, we are effectively denying our students the complete education they deserve.

We also know that putting pressure on teachers to ensure that students do well on their test can result in them clamping down on creativity and innovation. The high-stakes nature of the test can often result in teachers feeling compelled to "teach to the test," resulting in less flexibility to tailor lesson plans to individual students or class groups.

Less freedom and innovation can also mean frustrated teachers and higher classroom turnover.

This increased pressure on parents and students is counter-productive. Constructive pressure—the kind that motivates students to do better is much different from high-stakes pressure that stifles learning.

For these reasons, the IEA opposes S1071 and we ask you to hold this bill in committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

our state and country about civic engagement. We need a civics renaissance.” Additionally, the USA Today editorial board endorsed the idea earlier this month following the passage of similar legislation in North Dakota and Arizona.

In conclusion, it was our nation's <sup>third</sup>~~second~~ President and the drafter of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, who said that “if a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” Additionally, James Madison, considered to be the father of our Constitution, wrote that “a popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce, or a tragedy, or perhaps both.”

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, we request your vote today in support of Senate Bill 1071. Additionally, and behalf of myself, I ask for your vote in support of Senate Bill 1071, because going back to my first legislative session in 2005, I can't recall a single piece of legislation that I am more proud to support as this one. Senate Bill 1071 is a good bill and we ask for your support.

Thank you