

Sen.Mary Souza: Presentation of S1072 to Senate Ed Committee, Feb. 26. 2015:

**The main purpose of this bill is to increase transparency in local elections and improve accountability. It requires school board candidates to file campaign disclosure reports, just as other elected officials are required to do. Three years ago, Community College Trustee candidates were required to file sunshine reports, and I believe it is time for K-12 School Boards to be included as well. Let me remind the committee--only two other states, Alaska and North Dakota, in addition to Idaho, do not currently require these disclosures. A significant benefit of this legislation, in my opinion, will be to build trust with voters, and we know how important it is to improve satisfaction with, and participation in, government.**

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 18, 2015, 8:52 A.M.

## **Press: We Agree With Mary**

For years, The Press editorial board has suggested that there is no more important elected office than that of school board trustee. These individuals have tremendous influence over the education of our children. What could be more important or valuable than that? Therefore, we agree wholeheartedly with Sen. Mary Souza and the Senate Education Committee in recommending full campaign finance disclosure by those seeking school board election. Idaho is one of just three states that exempt school board candidates from this requirement. The more information voters receive, the more informed their decisions will be. Our vote is for more transparency/**Coeur d'Alene Press Editorial Board.**

THURSDAY, FEB. 19, 2015, 12:46 P.M. Spokesman Review:

## **Poll: Trustees Should Disclose**

- **Wednesday Poll: 117 of 165 respondents (71%) support state Sen. Mary Souza's bill that would require candidates for Coeur d'Alene School Board to file financial disclosure statements as those for**

**other nonpartisan offices do.** Only 44 of 165 respondents (26.67%) oppose the measure. 4 (2.42%) are undecided.

Possible issues:

**1. Small towns:** Disclosure laws currently exempt City Council candidates in municipalities with less than 5000 population. This law is from the 1980s. The SOS's deputy, Tim Hurst, told me the original reason for the exemption is that small towns often have only minimal staff and the city clerk, who must record and track the disclosures, already wears many hats. This school board requirement would be filed with the County Clerk, not the city, so staff time will be more accessible.

**2. This might discourage candidates from filing:** School board members have important responsibilities. The instructions we all heard them receive from the ProTem, Sen Cameron and the gentleman from the Admin., regarding the IEN contracts and E-rate dollars are FAR more complex than filling out a simple campaign disclosure report.

**3. Emergency Clause:** Election May 19<sup>th</sup>: the SOS and Deputy SOS Tim Hurst told me it is workable. They have already been alerting County Clerks that this bill is in process. If and when it passes, the Clerks will be notified and asked to help school board candidates with forms and questions about reporting. ISBA also said they would work to help their members get up to speed.

CdA School Board Trustee Tom Hamilton:

**Dear Mary,**

**I have read your bill and I am unequivocally a supporter! I think this action is long overdue. It is often said that school boards are one of the most important elected offices there are as they deal with two precious commodities, our taxes and our kids!... I think we could speak on and on of the benefits of your**

**legislation. I would argue that those in opposition are likely those that have something to hide and that certainly isn't who I would want serving in elected office. I've offered to let anyone see my donors any time they wanted to. They are all merely friends and relatives who were grateful I was willing to run and wanted to help.... , I do believe that the benefits far outweigh any potential negatives and it is high time we lined this office up with the requirements for the other elected offices in our state.**