

MR. CHAIRMAN, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 105.

TODAY I AM REPRESENTING IDAHO BUSINESS FOR EDUCATION WHICH HAS 119 BUSINESS MEMBERS ACROSS THE STATE.

I AM ALSO SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF IDAHOANS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION – A COALITION OF 33 GROUPS THAT SUPPORT THE IDAHO CORE STANDARDS.

OUR COALITION IS MADE UP OF THE IDAHO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, THE IDAHO SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION, THE IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, THE IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, SEVERAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, SEVERAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE PRESIDENTS OF EVERY PUBLIC COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY IN THE STATE, AMONG OTHERS.

AS YOU CAN SEE THIS IS A DIVERSE COALITION - ONE OF THE BROADEST IN THE HISTORY OF THE STATE.

SO WHAT WOULD BRING SUCH A DIVERSE SET OF GROUPS TOGETHER?

WE ARE UNITED IN OUR STRONG BELIEF THAT THE IDAHO CORE STANDARDS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SETTING OUR STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL, WORK AND LIFE.

OUR COALITION IS NOT JUST A COLLECTION OF ORGANIZATIONS OR INTEREST GROUPS. WE ARE PARENTS,

GRANDPARENTS AND MAIN STREET BUSINESS LEADERS FROM EVERY CORNER OF IDAHO WHO BELIEVE THAT THE IDAHO CORE STANDARDS ARE ESSENTIAL.

IN BUSINESS WE ALWAYS START WITH THE WHY. SO WHY ARE THE CORE STANDARDS SO IMPORTANT?

BECAUSE RIGHT NOW:

ONE THIRD OF OUR STUDENTS DO NOT READ AT GRADE LEVEL BY 4TH GRADE AND ANOTHER THIRD HAVE ONLY BASIC READING PROFICIENCY.

BECAUSE 60 PERCENT OF OUR 4TH GRADE STUDENTS HAVE JUST BASIC OR BELOW BASIC MATH PROFICIENCY.

BECAUSE ONLY 17.8 PERCENT OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO TAKE THE SAT ARE CONSIDERED COLLEGE-READY AS DEFINED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

BECAUSE WE HAVE ONE OF THE LOWEST GO-ON RATES IN THE COUNTRY.

BECAUSE 50 PERCENT OF THE STUDENTS WHO DO GO ON NEED REMEDIATION IN MATH AND ENGLISH.

BECAUSE EVEN THE FEW WHO DO GO ON EVENTUALLY DROP OUT WITHOUT OBTAINING A POST-SECONDARY CREDENTIAL.

AS YOU HEARD FROM THE STATE BOARD OFFICE LAST WEEK, ALL OF THESE STATISTICS ARE MUCH WORSE FOR OUR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AND LATINO STUDENTS.

AND YET – STUDIES SHOW THAT BETWEEN 60 AND 70 PERCENT OF THE JOBS IN IDAHO BY 2018 WILL REQUIRE A POST-SECONDARY CREDENTIAL.

IBE BELIEVES THAT IT WILL BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR IDAHO TO CREATE THE WORKFORCE IT NEEDS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY WITHOUT STRONG IDAHO CORE STANDARDS.

WE REALIZE THAT SENATOR THAYN'S RESOLUTION IS A SINCERE EFFORT TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF THE OPPONENTS OF THE CORE STANDARDS AND GET EVERYONE ON BOARD.

OUR CONCERN IS THAT THIS RESOLUTION IS BOTH PREMATURE AND MAY HAVE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES THAT LEAD TO WEAKENING OF THE STANDARDS INSTEAD OF MAKING THEM BETTER.

IT CONTINUES TO BUILD UPON THE MISCONCEPTION THAT THE IDAHO CORE STANDARDS DICTATE WHICH BOOKS STUDENTS READ AND CONFUSES THE STANDARDS WITH CURRICULUM.

IN PRINCIPLE, WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE STATE REVIEWING THE IDAHO CORE STANDARDS. IN BUSINESS WE

REVIEW OUR DECISIONS ALL THE TIME. BUT WE DON'T DO IT UNTIL WE HAVE GIVEN THEM A CHANCE TO SUCCEED.

IT'S TRUE THAT THE CORE STANDARDS WERE ADOPTED IN JANUARY 2011, BUT THEY WERE NOT EVEN IMPLEMENTED IN THE SCHOOLS UNTIL THE FALL OF 2013 – JUST 18 SHORT MONTHS AGO.

IBE AND OUR COALITION BELIEVE WE MUST GIVE THE CORE STANDARDS A CHANCE TO SUCCEED BEFORE WE CAN CONDUCT A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL EVALUATION OF HOW THEY ARE WORKING.

SECONDLY, THE RESOLUTION LANGUAGE PUTS THE CURRENT STANDARDS IN NEGATIVE LIGHT AND ALREADY DRAWS THE CONCLUSION THAT THE CURRENT STANDARDS SHOULD BE ALTERED TO MAKE THEM MORE "IDAHO-SPECIFIC."

HOW DO YOU MAKE ALGEBRA, OR GEOMETRY OR BASIC ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION MORE IDAHO SPECIFIC? HOW DO YOU MAKE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE MORE IDAHO SPECIFIC?

TWO, PLUS TWO EQUALS FOUR WHETHER YOU ARE IN IDAHO, TEXAS OR KANSAS. PROPER GRAMMAR, SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND COMPREHENSION IS THE SAME IF YOU ARE IN IDAHO, IOWA OR OHIO.

THIRDLY, THE RESOLUTION CALLS FOR THE STATE BOARD AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF "LITERATURE CONTENT."

THIS LANGUAGE CONTINUES TO PERPETUATE THE MISUNDERSTANDING THAT THE CORE STANDARDS DICTATE WHAT BOOKS STUDENTS READ.

IN FACT, THE STANDARDS SET THE BAR FOR WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW IN MATH AND ENGLISH AT THE APPROPRIATE GRADE LEVEL. CURRICULUM AND WHAT BOOKS STUDENTS READ IS CONTROLLED BY LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS JUST AS ALWAYS.

BY COMPARISON, THE IDAHO CORE STANDARDS ARE THE OBJECTIVE OR GOAL - LIKE RUNNING A MARATHON REQUIRES SOMEONE TO RUN 26.2 MILES.

HOW A PERSON TRAINS FOR AND RUNS THE MARATHON IS THE HOW – OR IN THIS CASE THE CURRICLUM.

WE UNDERSTAND AND APPLAUD THE SPONSOR’S EFFORT TO FIND COMMON GROUND ON THE STANDARDS. IT’S ALWAYS GOOD TO HAVE EVERYONE ON BOARD.

BUT WE BELIEVE THAT WE NEED TO GIVE THE CURRENT STANDARDS A CHANCE TO SUCCEED. AFTER WE GIVE THEM TIME TO WORK, WE WILL WHOLEHEARTEDLY SUPPORT A FAIR AND BALANCED REVIEW OF THEM.

AT THIS TIME, WE RESPECTFULLY ASKS THE COMMITTEE TO HOLD THIS RESOLUTION. THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN.

Idahoans for Excellence in Education



- Caldwell Chamber of Commerce
- Meridian Chamber of Commerce
- Idaho Business for Education
- Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Idaho Education Association
- Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry
- Idaho Parents and Teachers Together
- Treasure Valley Education Partnership
- Emmett School District
- Meridian Joint School District
- Boise School District Idaho Parents and Teachers Together
- Treasure Valley Education Partnership
- Emmett School District
- Meridian Joint School District
- Gooding School District
- Idaho State Alliance of YMCAs
- Micron Technology
- Voices for Idaho's Children
- Mountain Home Chamber of Commerce
- Mountain Home School District
- Idaho Leads
- Idaho Digital Learning
- Idaho School Superintendents Association
- Idaho School Boards Association
- Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children
- Idaho State Board of Education
- Presidents of Idaho's Public Universities and Colleges
- Catholic Schools of Idaho
- Idaho Charter School Network
- Idaho Department of Commerce
- Transform Idaho
- Idaho Technology Council
- Idaho Department of Labor
- Lewis Clark Valley Chamber of Commerce

