

Senate Bill 1291 – Adult Completion Scholarship

- Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Caroline Merritt and I represent the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's membership includes more than 18 hundred, 40 (1,840) businesses in the largest metropolitan area of the state, collectively employing more than 123,000 Idahoans.
- We are here in support of Senate Bill 1291.
- Our members have a vested interest in ensuring that our state has a qualified workforce equipped for the jobs for which their businesses are hiring.
- However, as I am sure you have heard before, many employers statewide are telling us that they are finding it more and more difficult to recruit qualified employees. As a result, their businesses are suffering or, at the very least, not growing as quickly as they could.
- The economic development arm of the Chamber, the Boise Valley Economic Partnership, hears many of the same concerns as they work to recruit new businesses to Idaho or encourage existing businesses to remain in Idaho for their expansion.
- To address these concerns, as you know, the State Board of Education, in conjunction with Idaho educators and government leaders, set a statewide goal for 60% of Idaho's high school graduates to earn a certificate, 2-year, or 4-year post-secondary degree. We believe that achieving this 60% goal would help ensure skilled labor for Idaho businesses.
- Encouraging adults to continue their education through this scholarship will help them develop the skills that are necessary to successfully contribute to Idaho's economy today.
- And by targeting adults who have already completed a portion of college, it makes the 60% goal just a little more achievable.

- As such, we believe that the adult completion scholarship is a unique tool that would be very beneficial to Idaho businesses, both large and small.
- Mr. Chairman, for these reasons, and for the reasons stated in the testimony before me, the Boise Metro Chamber asks for your support of this legislation and for your “yes” vote.
- I would be happy to stand for questions.