

Mr. Chair, members of the Senate Education Committee, on behalf of the members of the Idaho Education Association, I stand before you to oppose HB 627.

In order to reach agreement on the final piece of legislation that is now Idaho's teacher career ladder law, there were a handful of issues that we felt needed to be addressed.

One of those issues we worked out last year assured that EVERY teacher would be eligible for a Leadership Premium award.

HB 627 requires that no certificated individual getting a leadership premium can receive less than \$900. However, the legislation does not increase the amount of leadership dollars a school district will receive. This one change, by de facto—makes it impossible for every teacher to be eligible for an award—one of the critically important tenets that helped assure our organizational support last year. And, it is a critical reason why we oppose HB 627.

However, this is not the only concern we have regarding HB 627. The list of leadership duties encompassed in lines 19-39 on page 1 of the bill was never intended to address every single leadership activity a district could envision. It was intended to be general.

Please allow me to direct you to page 1, lines 27-28 of the bill. Not only is the addition of Career and Technical Education instructors already addressed in lines 25 and 26 on that same page, but it is also incorporated in lines 36-39. Adding specific language regarding Career and Technical education teachers is not necessary, nor does it take into account all of the areas of teacher shortage in our state. What might be considered a shortage area this year, may not be a shortage area next year and is a valid reason for keeping the list more general in nature.

I have several documents I'd like to share with you this morning. The first is a list of Teacher Shortage Areas beginning with the 1990-1991 school year through the 2015-2016 school year. This is a portion of a document compiled each year by the US Dept. of Education to identify those teaching areas, by state, that are eligible for federal loan forgiveness.

I have only copied the pages for Idaho, but I am happy to provide you with a link to the entire report. According to this report, the State of Idaho identified that there are more than 40 Teacher Shortage Areas in Idaho this year.

Ag Science and Automotive Technology are among the shortage areas, but so are Elementary teachers, secondary English teachers, literacy teachers, special education teachers in all grade levels, secondary history teachers, PE teachers, and secondary social studies teachers...just to name a few.

The second, one-page document comes from a report generated by the Office of Idaho's State Board of Education for alternative authorizations issued last school year. Last year Idaho issued 2 provisional authorizations to Ag Science teachers and 25 endorsements for general education teachers, 20 for math teachers, and 12 for English teachers.

My point is not to downplay the importance of Career-Technical Education. Instead, it is to point out that by singling out one area of the teaching profession in Idaho Code and identifying it as "hard to fill" or in any way signaling that those who teach in this area are more important or more valuable than other teachers borders on an insult to all of those other teachers who are working in areas that might be considered hard to fill. It serves to cause unnecessary resentment and frustration.

We assume that many of the changes outlined in this bill come as a result of the Leadership Premiums report you received several weeks ago. We could debate whether that report is an accurate reflection of what actually occurred in districts across the state, but that discussion is probably best held at another time.

For the record, we do not believe it did, and if there had been an opportunity for a 'do over' we believe the report would have looked very different from the one you saw and which was used to make decisions about changes to the leadership premium award section of the career ladder law.

While we do hope that many of the changes found on Page 2, lines 12-36 of this legislation will help ensure a more accurate report next year, we do not believe the other changes outlined in this bill are necessary and we would urge you, at a minimum, to send HB 627 to General Orders to delete the changes found on Page 1 and the language increasing the minimum amount from \$850 to \$900 on Page 2 line 10.

If that is not possible, we would ask that you hold HB 627 in committee and urge stakeholders to work with our respective members in the coming year to assure that the Leadership Premiums are distributed in accordance with your expectations.