

Good afternoon ~~Mr. Vice Chairman, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee,~~

*working in my dream job*

My name is Kyle McMorrow: I am 23 years old, a first year American Government teacher at Boise High, a graduate of Boise State University, a 5<sup>th</sup> generation Idahoan, and a member of the 2003 Peregrine Elementary Idaho History Bee team.

I love Idaho, I love Idaho history, and it is one of my goals as an educator to help my students become the best citizens that they can be. But, I would like to speak to you about why I feel the addition of questions to the civics exam dealing with Idaho History are not necessary, and are in fact counter productive to our goals and objectives in our classrooms.

Everyday in our classrooms we are striving to induce good citizenship in our students. While I appreciate the sentiment of the Civics exam as a way of promoting citizenship, I do not feel that it meets this requirement. We strive hard to promote our civics classes as being more than trivial information. We promote our classes as being areas of critical thinking and learning. I would much rather my students be able to explain the circumstances behind the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the ideas Jefferson borrowed from John Locke that that the government must stand for the rights of the citizenry. I would much rather them understand that than the searchable fact that it was signed on July 4th, 1776. I would argue that a student could pass this test, and not show any qualities of a good citizen besides knowing trivia about our government, country and state. I would also like to tell you about a student who barely passed the exam given to her this year, she is not academically gifted, but is one of the more outstanding citizens I have ever met. She shows love and compassion for all of those around her without abandon. This is what I am proud to see in my students, but it is not something that can be tested.

I agree that we need to continue the great traditions in Idaho as we see more and more ~~outsiders~~ <sup>People</sup> moving to this wonderful state, but it is more important for our students to learn by exploring the history of Idaho, understanding the richness of this state, instead of knowing facts that can be easily googled. As our curriculum currently stands Perhaps these questions will have a negative effect on those who did not attend elementary in Idaho will find the questions abrasive and demoralizing. Who really are we serving with these questions?

The goals of civics education are changing. They are changing from memorizing dates and reciting facts that have been read in a book. The goals now encourage students to take stances on issues they feel strongly about, to research and form fact-based analysis of their opinions and values. To speak eloquently on matters that they find important and have a sense of appropriate rhetoric. We want our students To understand how the government works in a practical matter, that can be used to help them make a difference in their lives and their community. We strive for our students to go further than their exams and readings, to put what they learn into action.

If you find Idaho history to be important to our subject area, it should be added to our standards so that we may teach it properly. I would ask this committee to keep up with the current education goals, to trust us educators to teach the civics that are set as standards in our curriculum, in the most effective manner.

I teach a group of amazing young people, and I am truly surrounded by greatness, but this greatness doesn't come from multiple choice exams or facts that they know. It comes from who they are, what they believe in, and the amazing ways that they SHOW citizenship everyday in our schools, our cities, and our state.