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**Testimony for the Senate Education Committee
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I sat through the hearings on the science standards last year and I was disappointed when we were unable to get them passed last year. But I was optimistic that we would be able to come back this year with more acceptable wording and finally get this job done. I was also optimistic after attending the subsequent Board of Education meetings that gathered input on how to best revise the standards for resubmission this year.

After all of this input – all in favor of finding a way to update and finally pass new and overdue science standards in this state after THREE LONG years of debate, I am appalled to find us not moving forward, but instead moving backwards this year as you revisit this issue. To find the House Education Committee has deleted 25 pages of the proposed standards- way beyond the 5 climate change standards that were omitted last year - I am appalled. We are clearly moving in the wrong direction here.

I cannot believe the legislature has taken THREE LONG YEARS to hash and rehash the work of award winning teachers, scientists, parents and educators. The Science Standards Committee is made up of the best of the best minds we have in Idaho. I cannot believe that our politicians think they know better than the folks who are working in this field. This has been an incredible waste of our taxpayer dollars and a distraction for these teachers and educators who could be focusing directly on our students in classrooms across the state.

Enough is enough. Let's get this job done and pass the standards as proposed but the Science Standards Committee. The current proposed standards were not only written by the best minds we have, they are also the result of input from Idaho citizens in hearings across the state, put on by the State Board of Education. They couldn't be more thought out.

This process is an embarrassment to our state. I don't want to see more articles in the national news highlighting our backwards politics and our short-sighted thinking. I don't want to see us putting politics over science. Please do what is right for our teachers and our students and pass the standards with the supporting science content that is so important and useful for teachers. It is time to move Idaho forward and give our students equal opportunity to be participants in understanding the challenges and innovating the solutions those challenges will demand in their future.

By ignoring the advice of the experts, you are not only handicapping our students, you are sending a message that experts are not to be trusted. That science is not important, and that politics are more important than education. I do not want to send this message to our students and I do not want to send this message to the rest of the country. Idaho is positioned to be a leader, to provide one of the last best places to study and understand the natural world and take a lead in the preservation of the planet. Please help Idaho realize our potential to contribute and to educate our students to play a role in their future.

The choice today is whether we want to better equip our students or not, to enable them to engage knowledgeably or not. If we want students to value education, I urge you to demonstrate that Idaho values education, and that you respect the years of education and experience invested in developing the curriculum recommendations before you.

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