

MR. CHAIRMAN, MY NAME IS ROD GRAMER, PRESIDENT OF IDAHO BUSINESS FOR EDUCATION, A GROUP OF 200 BUSINESS LEADERS FROM ACROSS IDAHO. I AM HERE TO SPEAK IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 1279.

THIS BILL GIVES THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION THE FLEXIBILITY TO ALLOCATE UP TO 20 PERCENT OF THE OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP TO WORKING ADULTS WHO HAVE SOME COLLEGE, BUT NO DEGREE.

THERE ARE NEARLY 200,000 WORKING ADULTS IN IDAHO WHO FALL INTO THIS CATEGORY, ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY BY THE LUMINA FOUNDATION. MANY OF THEM ARE A FEW CREDITS SHORT OF FINISHING THEIR CREDENTIAL OR DEGREE.

~~Many states are addressing
the gap, most notably
Tennessee & Mississippi~~

THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATE PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT SO SOME OF THESE WORKERS CAN GO BACK AND FINISH THEIR CREDENTIAL.

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IN FACT, IBE'S CHAIR, BOB LOKKEN, WHO CO-CHAIRLED THE GOVERNOR'S HIGHER EDUCATION TASK FORCE, HAS SAID IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR IDAHO TO ACHIEVE ITS IMPORTANT 60 PERCENT GOAL WITHOUT DOING THIS. WHICH MEANS WE WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY CREATING THE WORKFORCE THAT OUR EMPLOYERS NEED.

**THE CITIZENS WHO NEED OUR HELP ARE HARD-
WORKING IDAHOANS WHO HAD THEIR
EDUCATION INTERRUPTED FOR FAMILY REASONS,
OFTEN HEALTH REASONS AND ESPECIALLY
FINANCIAL REASONS.**

* Team Chamber of
Commerce Dept
of Family Financial Policy

TWO YEARS AGO, ERIC HANUSHEK, SENIOR FELLOW AT THE HOOVER INSTITUTE AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY, TOLD OUR LAWMAKERS THAT IF IDAHO COULD INCREASE ITS EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT TO THE LEVEL OF MINNESOTA WE COULD MORE THAN DOUBLE OUR STATE'S GROSS STATE PRODUCT.

WE COULD DO THAT WITHOUT ADDING ONE MORE JOB OR COMPANY TO OUR STATE.

CLEARLY, IF WE CAN HELP SOME OF THESE WORKING ADULTS FINISH THEIR EDUCATION, WE CAN INCREASE THEIR PRODUCTIVITY, THE VALUE THEY PROVIDE THEIR EMPLOYER, AND IMPROVE THE STATE'S ECONOMY ALL AT THE SAME TIME.

MR. CHAIRMAN, IBE HOPES THE COMMITTEE SENDS SENATE BILL 1279 TO THE FLOOR WITH A DO-PASS RECOMMENDATION.