

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 07, 2018

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman VanOrden, Vice Chairman McDonald, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Clow, Mendive, Kerby, Cheatham, Amador, DeMordaunt, Moon, Syme, Ehardt, McCrostie, Toone, Gannon(5)

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) DeMordaunt

GUESTS: Charles Stout, Caldwell; Tim Hurst, Secretary of State; Kelli D. Brassfield, Idaho Association of Counties; Karen Echeverria, Idaho School Boards Association; Dwight Johnson, Idaho Career Technical Education; Rod Gramer, Idaho Business for Education; Dr. N. Shalene French, Caldwell School District; Alyssa Townsend; Beth Oppenheimer, Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children; Clark Corbin, Idaho Education News; Gidion Tolman, Division of Financial Management

Chairman VanOrden called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

S 1280: **Senator Souza** spoke to **S 1280**. She said the bill makes one important change. It moves school board elections from May to November, which is when city elections are held, in the hopes of increasing voter turnout for school board elections. Senator Souza said research shows parent, family and community involvement in education correlates to higher student performance. She said the voter turnout for the West Ada School District Board of Trustees Election was only three percent last year. In Boundary County and Nampa, only 2% of voters turned out for the school board elections. Senator Souza said school boards are important and have a direct impact on the quality of schools. A better voter turnout will increase the visibility of board members, she added. The city election date was chosen, because voter turnout for that date is much better, said Senator Souza. She said the county clerks are concerned, because none of the precinct and school boundary maps match, so they must create more ballots. She offered to work with county clerks next year, after the census, on aligning the county and city zones better. School boards have a certain number of days after the census to establish their boundaries, she said. The Secretary of State Office may have new technology which will show which county and city a voter lives in, she added.

In response to questions from the committee, **Senator Souza** said voter turnout in her own county for city elections was twenty percent. For school board elections, it was eight percent, and then went down to five percent. No local control is taken away, she said, but consistency is needed across the state.

MOTION: **Rep. Cheatham** made a motion to send **S 1280** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

In response to questions from the committee, **Senator Souza** said she believes moving the election to November will help people realize the importance of school board members, and more people will run for office.

Charles Stout, Caldwell School Board, spoke **in support** of **S 1280**. He said the resolution was brought to the Idaho School Board Association, but it was thought the elections for boards of trustees would be buried in the November General Elections. A compromise was to add the election to the city election date. He said voter turnout for levies in November are better than levies run in March. In response to questions from the committee, Mr. Stout said he did not think the November date would affect the training in budget workshops board members take during the summer months, because anyone who wants to serve will take an interest in proceedings during the summer. Also, new trustees are not sworn in until January, he added. He said in the 2015 election, all three Caldwell School Board trustees had an opponent, but each won by only four votes, because the voter turnout was so low.

Tim Hurst, Secretary of State, spoke **in opposition** to **S 1280**. He said the bill is an election bill, not an education bill. Mr. Hurst gave a history of why the election dates were chosen, and explained what gets voted on in May and what gets voted on in November. Many different types of districts are involved, he said. Cassia County has only one district, but Canyon County has thirteen different types of districts. The chances of error are greater with each district or zone, he added, leading to potential ballot error. Removing school district elections from the May Ballot and on to the November Ballot will complicate the ballot in November and reduce voter turnout for the districts on the May Ballot, he said. Mr. Hurst said he did not think moving the election date would increase voter turnout, saying the candidates and issues drive voter participation more than when the elections are held. Other things which could be more effective are holding school elections county wide, not by school zone, and allowing residents to vote by mail, which vastly improves voter turnout, he added.

In response to questions from the committee, **Mr. Hurst** said before the consolidation in 2011, each district had its own elections and had very poor voter turnout. The Secretary of State Office was notified about the legislation, and the bill drafters knew of his concern, but he had no input into the drafting of the legislation, said Mr. Hurst. The problems with moving the school board elections to November is that the elections in May will be affected, and it makes the ballots in November even more complicated, said Mr. Hurst. The greater the complexity, the greater the chance for error, he added. He said he did not think it would work, and it would not increase voter turnout. Also, the cost will increase, he said, citing Oregon needing three full-time employees as an example. Mr. Hurst said that when candidates are listed on a non-partisan ballot, a random alphabet arrangement is used to list them. In every odd-numbered year that an election is scheduled, if only one candidate is running, and there are no write-in candidates, the election is cancelled, he added. If the school board trustee election is moved to November, most counties would not have a May election at all, said Mr. Hurst.

Kelli Brassfield, Idaho Association of Counties, spoke **in opposition** of **S 1280**. She said **Mr. Hurst** addressed most of the same concerns of the Association. The bill will increase the number of ballots which will be needed. Also, redistricting will happen in a few years after the census, she said, and she asked the committee to hold the bill. In response to questions from the committee, Mr. Hurst said there is no law which says the precincts must be aligned with school boundaries, and they are difficult to align. If they followed the precinct lines, it would help with the layering, he said.

In response to questions from the committee, **Ms. Brassfield** said **S 1280** increases the chances of voter ballot error. In response to questions from the committee, **Mr. Hurst** said voter turnout for school board elections varies, based on the candidates in the election and on the issues. In response to questions from the committee, Ms. Brassfield said that, because there is more than one precinct in each county, there is more than one voting place. If the state wants to look at election consolidation, it should look at consolidating all elections at one time, she added.

Karen Echeverria said the ISBA supports moving the school board elections to odd years, but it wants the elections kept in the month of May. Most school boards are made up of five members, said Ms. Echeverria. Approximately seventy percent of the school districts in Idaho have only one candidate running for election, and three percent have no candidates running for election. Sixty days after the census, school zone boundaries are re-zoned, said Ms. Echeverria. Many school districts cross county lines and will never line up with the precinct lines, she added. In response to questions from the committee, Ms. Echeverria said some members felt that moving the election to November would encourage more candidates to run for election, and some felt fewer candidates would run for election. The majority of the members voted in favor of **S 1280**, she added.

Senator Souza said the process of drafting **S 1280** was a collaborative process involving the Secretary of State and the county clerks. The bill tries to include all aspects of concern, she added. The voter turnout was so low for the Kootenai County School Board Election of 2017, each ballot cost \$25, she said. She said she did not feel changing the date would increase the likelihood of errors, and county clerks have said they will train poll workers.

Rep. Moon spoke in support of the motion, saying she would like to see **S 1280** go to the floor for further debate.

Rep. McCrostie spoke in opposition of the motion, saying that changing the school board elections to November may decrease the voter turnout for the other elections held in May.

Rep. Ehardt spoke in support of the motion, saying **S 1280** is a start in the right direction, and she would like to see elections reduced to two elections, total.

Rep. Clow spoke in support of the motion.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:**

S 1295:

Motion carried by voice vote. Reps. McCrostie, Toone and Gannon requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**. **Rep. DeMordaunt** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Tracie Bent, State Board of Education, spoke to **S 1295**. She said the bill addresses funding for schools with a career technical focus. She explained each section of **S 1295**. Duplications in administrative code are removed, she said, and funding is based on enrollment, not seat time. In the old language, an additional .33 funding based on average daily attendance is added to cover specific facility costs. The new language provides for funding as a career technical school, and the school must make an application to the division of career technical education. The application date for additional funding is changed from July to April, said Ms. Bent. The new language specifies the schools must have enrollment from two or more attendance areas, and no one high school can comprise more than eighty-five percent of the total enrolled career technical students, said Ms. Bent. The school is required to offer dual credit classes, which is a change from using the term Advanced Opportunities. The bill specifies the schools must meet four out of five criteria, and it strikes unnecessary existing language, because students in school less than 2.5 hours do not meet requirements for the Americans with Disabilities Act, she added. The bill also specifies that transportation, facilities, experiential learning and staff salaries are allowed costs.

In response to questions from the committee, **Dwight Johnson**, Division of Career Technical Education, said the bill clarifies the requirements for the qualifications to be a career technical education school, and specifies a different funding formula. All career technical education programs receive additional funds for the added costs associated with CTE programs, whether the programs are in a career technical school or not, he added. The ADA Requirements have to be self-reported, he said, which is time consuming. The bill explores a new funding model which is more closely aligned with career technical education programs, he added. In response to questions from the committee, Mr. Johnson said the cost of the CTE teacher is paid for by the regular school district, and the qualifications for the teachers are in administrative rule. Different school districts have different structures of programs, based on the size of the staff, he said.

In response to questions from the committee, **Ms. Bent** said administrators with an academic administrator certificate now have an alternate route to obtain a career technical education administrator certificate. Teachers of career technical education programs are required to have CTE certificates, she added. A charter school could apply to be a career technical education school, said Ms. Bent, but this section of Idaho Code is specific to career technical education schools, not to traditional or charter schools.

In response to questions from the committee, **Mr. Johnson** said there are general funds already appropriated for career technical education programs, and **S 1295** provides for a funding model more appropriate to career technical schools. Mr. Johnson said the bill strengthens the schools' ability to create more advanced opportunities, which includes dual credit classes. The language is being expanded to offer more opportunities for college credit, he added. **Ms. Bent** said the number of dual credit career technical education courses have been increased.

MOTION: **Rep. Syme** made a motion to **HOLD S 1295** in committee. **Motion carried by voice vote. Reps. VanOrden, McDonald, McCrostie** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

Representative VanOrden
Chair

Jenifer Cavaness-Williams
Secretary