

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 19, 2019

TIME: 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, Mathias(Buckner-Webb), and Ward-Engelking

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Mortimer** called the Education Committee (Committee) to order at 2:02 p.m.

HCR 18 **Vice Chairman Thayn** presented **HCR 18**, Stating the Findings of the Legislature and Rejecting a Certain Rule of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. He stated this is regarding **Docket No. 47-0102-1801**. This proposed legislation is to ratify the findings of the House and the Senate in rejecting Section 500., Subsection 03.c.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to send **HCR 18** to the floor with a **do pass**. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Thayn.

H 194 On the behalf of Representative Clow, **Chairman Mortimer** presented **H 194**, Relating to Public Libraries; Wireless Internet Access. He said in 2011, Chapter 27, Title 33 of Idaho Code was created to address the concerns that minors were gaining access to inappropriate or indecent material through Idaho public libraries. The proposed legislation adds the words: publicly accessible wireless internet access to the current code. This is updating he filtering for public accessible wireless access. **Chairman Mortimer** said he would like to have **H 194** go to the 14th Order of Business for a possible amendment to change the effective date from 2019 to 2020. He explained how libraries can qualify for e-rate money to help off-set the cost of the upgrades.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if the funding is to be supplemental. **Chairman Mortimer** replied that is yet to be determined. Some of the libraries have been receiving e-rate funding. He said extending the deadline out a year allows libraries to have more implementation options.

Senator Woodward asked if there is hardware available for libraries to purchase to make the filtering work. **Chairman Mortimer** replied each library is unique. He said it is his understanding that some internet providers have filtering services available to their clients.

TESTIMONY: **Gretchen Casterotti**, Director, Meridian Library, asked to hold **H 194** in Committee. She detailed the past filtering process and the associated costs. She addressed the fiscal note in the proposed legislation and stated the costs are higher than projected. She said there is a lack of funds and technical skills to implement the filter. She expressed her concerns about rural libraries being able to facilitate this mandate. She assured the Committee that librarians monitor computer usage and discipline any misuse (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION: **Senator Den Hartog** asked if it is her understanding that libraries are required to have a filtering system, and is the to expansion to include wireless filtering. **Ms. Casterolli** replied in the affirmative. She stated there are costs to install filters and costs to the staff for "whitelisting" specific terminologies.

TESTIMONY: **Kate Lovan**, Library Director, Middleton, Idaho, representing the Idaho Library Association, explained the proposed legislation would create a hardship for many small and rural libraries. She detailed the work the Middleton library has done to meet the current requirements. She stated it would be a financial burden for many of the libraries. She asked the Committee to hold **H 194**.

John Watts, representing the Idaho Library Commission, asked the Committee to move with caution on **H 194**. He said this can be done but not in the current timeframe. He said he has met with a variety of experts on this topic, and they each had a different opinion regarding the costs and the time to implement. He indicated that much of the costs to implement would fall to the individual libraries and not the State. He asked the Committee to adjust the implementation requirements out to 2020, so the libraries have time to research the best options.

Chairman Mortimer closed by thanking the librarians for their diligence in monitoring and filtering computer accesses. He stated the proposed legislation expands the filtering to include wireless internet . The concern that has been expressed is who will pay for the costs. He asked the Committee to extend the deadline to 2020 to give libraries more time to make more informed decisions in implementing the required filtering.

MOTION: **Senator Winder** moved to send **H 194** to the 14th Order of Business for possible amendment. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion.

Senator Ward-Engelking stated her concerns regarding costs and funding. She said technology is changing rapidly and in the near future this may no longer be a concern.

The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Vice Chairman Thayn passed the gavel to Chairman Mortimer.

PRESENTATION: **Laura Jordan**, Intern, Boise State University, presented General Education Diploma (GDE) Opportunities for Idaho Students. She shared with the Committee the research findings for an educational solution for those Idaho students who disappear from the education system without a high school diploma. She explained to the Committee how Idaho tracks students, the reasons why a student would leave high school, and the operational system of the GED program. The suggested solutions from Ms. Jordan's research include: incentivizing students to take the GED by paying for the exam, requiring the educational institutions to award college credits for scores over 175, and tracking exiting students until the age of 21 (Attachment 2).

In response to questions, **Ms. Jordan** explained the lack of school cohort information for those taking the GED. She explained the possibility of the community colleges being able to track the exiting students, because those students returning to earn their GED would be more inclined to look there for help.

Chairman Mortimer thanked Ms. Jordan for her research on this subject and stated it is important to address Idaho's drop-out student population and how they can be educated.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 2:51 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary