

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 27, 2020

TIME: 8:30 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Goesling, Marshall, Raymond, Wisniewski, McCrostie, Abernathy, Berch

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: Harold Ott, Rural Schools; Quinn Perry, ISBA; Fred Birnbaum

Chairman Clow called the meeting to order at 8:32 am.

Kevin Satterlee, President, Idaho State University (ISU) and Chairman, State Board of Education Presidents' Leadership Council, introduced the presidents of Idaho's public, four-year institutions. They asked to appear jointly to talk about their new vision and model for working together to better serve Idaho. A primary goal is to efficiently and effectively provide access to higher education. He noted 90% of the most in-demand jobs in Idaho require at least a bachelor's degree. He listed their shared priorities as: cybersecurity, utilizing dual enrollment, impacting the go-on rate, research collaboration, investigating systemwide efficiencies, sharing systemwide best practices for student success, stabilizing the funding mechanism and addressing affordability.

Dr. Marlene Tromp, President, Boise State University (BSU), discussed innovation at BSU and two new initiatives. First, the Community Impact initiative, which reaches into rural communities to serve students in-place and second, Future Forward, a new scholarship program specifically for rural students.

President Satterlee discussed ISU's efforts to focus on affordability, efficiency and address student retention and recruitment.

Dr. Cynthia Pemberton, President, Lewis-Clark State College, discussed how they serve students and the make-up of their student population. She noted they awarded a record number of bachelor's degrees in 2019 and increased their graduation rate to 40%.

C. Scott Green, President, University of Idaho (U of I), discussed his three strategic priorities: supporting student success, stabilizing and growing research enterprise and telling U of I's story. He discussed how U of I is addressing their \$22 million budget shortfall.

In response to Committee questions about financial pressures, **President Green** acknowledged programs are cut every year and student supports are often the first to go. He stated the need for everyone to realize that lack of funding does mean losses are incurred.

In response to questions about duplication of services, **President Tromp** stated rather than reproducing programs, the four presidents are trying to synergize and deliver their individual expertise, so that higher education is greater than the sum of its parts. She noted each institution is looking for efficiencies.

H 554:

Rep. DeMordaunt presented **H 554**, which would provide funding, subject to appropriation, for teachers to buy classroom supplies. She stated teachers in high poverty schools spend more of their own money, so this would be particularly important in our rural state. She argued depending on a teacher's personal funds for classroom supplies does not meet the constitutional obligation for a "uniform and thorough system" of public education. The appropriated funds would go directly into the classroom, so teachers would have autonomy to buy according to their students' specific needs.

In response to Committee questions, **Rep. DeMordaunt** argued providing money directly to every classroom teacher is the most direct way to help defray the cost of supplies, rather than relying on the generosity of parents or others. She said this bypasses bureaucracy and while teachers can currently claim a tax deduction, that still relies on what's in their pocketbooks. In terms of enriching classroom experiences for students, she stated this could be used equally by all grade levels.

Fred Birnbaum, Idaho Freedom Foundation, spoke **in opposition** to the bill, saying adding another education line item will contribute to a lack of funding transparency. He stated the bill assumes all needs are the same and it will add work for each teacher to manage their own supply fund.

Rep. DeMordaunt closed testimony, saying the bill offers a streamlined approach that removes complexity. It gives the funds directly to the teachers who know their challenges, objectives and needs. She expressed confidence in teachers' ability to manage \$100 for supplies.

ORIGINAL MOTION:

Vice Chairman Kerby made a motion to send **H 554** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. He said it was not universally true that teachers have control over how supplies are given and this will give teachers control and help them infuse their personality into the classroom.

Rep. Marshall spoke **in opposition** to the motion. He expressed his preference to put extra money towards teacher salaries and said in his experience, essential classroom supplies are always available to teachers.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Rep. Moon made a substitute motion to **HOLD H 554** in Committee. She said it was not prudent to entertain this bill after spending so much money to raise veteran teachers' salaries.

Rep. McCrostie spoke **in support** of the original motion, saying even in larger, urban school districts, essential supplies are not always available.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Roll call vote was requested. **Motion carried by a vote of 9 AYE and 6 NAY.** **Voting in favor** of the motion: **Reps. Shepherd, Boyle, Mendive, Moon, Ehardt, Marshall, Raymond, Wisniewski and Abernathy.** **Voting in opposition** to the motion: **Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Reps. DeMordaunt, Goesling, McCrostie and Berch.**

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 am.

Representative Clow
Chair

Erica McGinnis
Secretary