

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 03, 2020

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

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

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Winder

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 meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:01 p.m.

PRESENTATION: **Representative Furniss** presented information relating to health insurance for Idaho teachers (see Attachment 1). **Representative Furniss** outlined the challenges and reviewed the cost of covering teachers under the state employee health insurance plan. Coverage would be voluntary by district, not individually. One of the reasons for difficulty in hiring and retaining teachers, especially in the rural and small districts, is because of limited health care coverage and benefits.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Thayn** stated that what has been said is actually about reducing barriers to primary care and access to care, and getting better care at less cost. He said some best practices need to be discussed and cited the Allegheny School District as an example.

S 1324 **Senator Burgoyne** said **S 1324** is about the Idaho Promise Mentor Program and he introduced Dr. Jean Henscheid, PhD, to present the bill (see Attachment 2). **Dr. Henscheid** said she is here in her capacity as a workforce training and education policy analyst and a fellow with the National Resource Center for the first year experience and students in transition. She acknowledged several people who have accompanied her today and who have been instrumental in helping to have conversations about the program.

The purpose of the program is to fill vacant, good-paying jobs by helping recent Idaho high school graduates, veterans, and other adults earn post-high school career-ready credentials. **Dr. Henscheid** said that volunteers are needed to assist the people in the program and they need to be willing to receive a little training, go through a background check, and work with them for as little as five hours per month.

She explained that mechanisms are in place through the State Board of Education (SBE) and through non-profit organizations to train and support some community mentors across the state. Donors could be asked to help underwrite this work as it would involve 14 paid mentor coordinators who would then identify, train, and support local community volunteers.

Chairman Mortimer asked Senator Burgoyne to explain the fiscal impact of this bill. **Senator Burgoyne** stated that the program asks for a mix of grants, gifts, and appropriation to cover costs. It would be implemented in stages. **Senator Burgoyne** indicated that he has a proposed amendment to allow the program to accept both public and private funds and requested that the bill be sent to the 14th Order of Business.

MOTION: **Senator Winder** moved to send **S 1324** to the 14th Order of Business for possible amendment. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

S 1328 **Vice Chairman Thayn** introduced **S 1328** and said the bill allows 1 percent of the funding for the Advanced Opportunities Program to be allocated for students of non-public education to receive funding for dual credit courses or Advanced Placement (AP) tests. **Vice Chairman Thayn** stated he asked the Attorney General's Office for an opinion regarding the "no aid" provision which is commonly referred to as the Blaine Amendment (see Attachment 3).

TESTIMONY: **Ariel Kotte**, a senior attending Nampa Christian High, testified in favor of **S 1328**. She stated that she has spent \$1,350 on concurrent credits and that figure does not include calculus. **Ms. Kotte** acknowledged that financial help would have drastically increased her collegiate readiness.

Quinn Perry, Policy and Government Affairs Director for the Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), spoke in opposition to **S 1328**. **Ms. Perry** said their main concern was that it puts an additional burden onto school districts, many of which are already strapped for resources in order to provide these programs. She requested that the bill's sponsor consider amending the bill to explicitly define the responsibilities of the non-public school where the child attends.

Jack Horton, a sophomore at Bishop Kelly High School, testified in support of **S 1328**. He told the Committee that in order to better prepare Idaho students for post-secondary education, Advanced Opportunities funding should be available for all students.

Paul Stark, General Counsel for the Idaho Education Association (IEA), testified in opposition to **S 1328**. He stated that private school students could attend dual credit courses through a public school in order to have those costs covered. He asked the Committee to hold **S 1328** to better address the constitutional problems, other potential problems, and also the line item.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Thayn** addressed the concerns of those who had testified against the bill and recommended that SBE create administrative rules to govern the distribution of funds under the bill.

MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **S 1328** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion.

Senator Den Hartog stated she had a conflict of interest pursuant to Senate Rule 39(H) but intended to vote. Her son is a freshman in a private school and could potentially benefit from this.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved that **S 1328** be held in Committee. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: **Chairman Mortimer** said a roll call vote would be taken on the substitute motion. **Senators Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking** voted aye. **Vice Chairman Thayn, Senator Den Hartog, and Chairman Mortimer** voted nay. The motion carried.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:19 p.m.

Senator Mortimer
Chair

Morgan Howard
Secretary

Juanita Budell
Assistant Secretary