

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 05, 2020

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, 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 Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:03 p.m.

H 522 **Representative Julianne Young** told the Committee that **H 522** addresses online resources for kindergarten through twelfth grade students. She went on that the Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) databases have had resources that are not compliant with Idaho Code §18-1514. **Representative Young** continued that the bill would allow LiLI to terminate contracts with database providers who do not ensure that their content is compliant.

Stephanie Gifford, District 30 and member of Protect Child Health Coalition, told the Committee that many students use LiLI database resources for their schoolwork. She went on that some of the databases provide resources that meet the legal definition of "obscene" or "harmful to children." **Ms. Gifford** told the Committee that computers' content filters will not filter the content provided by these databases. The databases would have to apply their own content filters to meet the content restrictions of a given state.

Senator Ward-Engelking expressed a concern that no filter could block out all questionable material. **Ms. Gifford** agreed that it was unlikely to block all questionable material and went on that the bill sought to block the material that meets the legal definition of "harmful to children."

Representative Young closed by emphasizing that the bill wasn't meant to be rigid, but to allow schools and database providers to promote safe material for minors.

TESTIMONY: **Jamie Holyoak**, Superintendent of Grace Joint School District, testified in support of **H 522** and told the Committee that schools are entrusted with the safety of students during school hours and should take that commitment seriously. He went on that students who seek out inappropriate content in school lose internet privileges, and that resource providers should face the same consequences for providing inappropriate content.

Brian Hall, elementary school educator, testified in support of **H 522**. He told the Committee that students should not be exposed to obscene material in the course of their schoolwork. He went on that **H 522** would help keep students safe from exposure to obscene material.

Lindsay Zea summarized a letter from Dr. Craig Cobeya of Citizens for Decency which encouraged the Committee to support **H 522** (see Attachment 1).

MOTION: **Senator Lent** moved to send **H 522** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Chairman Mortimer will sponsor the bill on the floor.

S 1330 **Tracie Bent**, Chief Planning and Policy Officer for the State Board of Education (Board), explained that the Extended Employment Service (EES) program has been established through budget setting, but not through actual codification. She went on that without EES being established in Idaho Code, neither the Board nor the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has the proper degree of direction to properly administer EES. **Ms. Bent** told the Committee that **S 1330** codifies EES and establishes what services EES shall provide, to whom those services shall be provided, and the circumstances under which services shall be provided.

At the prompting of the Committee, **Ms. Bent** presented the proposed amendment to **S 1330** and explained key changes. The amendment would provide greater detail to the description of the services EES would provide, the administering body of EES, the contractors that EES would work with, and the funding availability for EES.

TESTIMONY: **Maureen Stokes**, President and CEO of WitCo, Inc., testified in support of **S 1330** and its proposed amendments. She thanked Chairman Mortimer and Ms. Bent for their work on the amendments. She went on that EES has always been funded and controlled by Idaho. **Ms. Stokes** told the Committee that EES has served thousands of Idahoans through the dignity of work and should be able to continue to do so.

Tim Starns, Director of Vocational Services for Transition, Inc and President of Employment Services of Idaho, spoke in support of **S 1330** as printed. He went on that the bill without amendments would be sufficient to serve the needs of EES. **Mr. Starns** concluded that the minutia addressed by the amendments should be addressed in rulemaking.

Glenn Roach, WitCo, Inc., testified in support of **S 1330** and its proposed amendments. He said that the program that would benefit from the bill offers work skill development for those who would not otherwise have the ability to develop those skills.

Tracy Warren, Program Specialist with Council on Developmental Disabilities, spoke in support of the bill as written. She told the Committee that the bills offers a valuable opportunity for Idaho to establish an employment services program reflecting modern best practices in Idaho.

Hannah Liedkie, President of Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., testified in support of **S 1330** and the proposed amendments. She spoke to the need to protect the program and the people it serves, and concluded that **S 1330** is an effective piece of legislation with the proposed amendments.

Mel Leviton, Executive Director of the Idaho State Independent Living Council, spoke in support of **S 1330** as written. She told the Committee that **S 1330** positively impacts Idahoans with disabilities, particularly those suffering from severe, persistent mental illnesses, epilepsy, or traumatic brain injuries, who do not qualify to work for sub-minimum wages in segregated settings, and who spend years on work waiting lists.

DISCUSSION: **Jane Donellan**, Administrator for the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR), explained the history of work waiting lists and the ways in which IDVR had worked to reduce the waiting list and increase efficiency to ensure that all eligible individuals receive the services they qualify for through comparable programs.

MOTION: **Senator Woodward** moved to send **S 1330** to the 14th Order of Business for possible amendment. **Senator Lent** seconded the motion.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved that **S 1330** be held in the Committee subject to the call of the Chair. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion.

MOTION WITHDRAWN: **Senator Ward-Engelking** withdrew the substitute motion. There were no objections.

VOTE: The motion to send **S 1330** to the 14th Order of Business for possible amendment passed by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:21 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

Morgan Howard
Secretary