

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS28756 / H0294

Strong Students Grant program and Strong Students Scholarship program. Part One is the Strong Students Grant Program which formalizes the Strong Families, Strong Students grant program to help parents meet their child's unique educational needs. Under Part One, students at public schools, charter schools, private schools, or are home schooled will receive \$500 grants per student per year to pay for allowable education expenses. Grants are available first to families whose Adjusted Gross Income is below \$50,000 per year, then to families earning up to \$75,000 and then to everyone else for as long as the funding lasts for that year. Part Two of this bill creates a program to provide scholarships for a limited number of students who have previously attended public schools but who subsequently need different options. Qualification standards are the same as for the grant program described above. Scholarships would be equal to 90 percent of the average amount of state funds appropriated per student during the prior fiscal year. Parents will be able to access and spend the grant and scholarship funds on behalf of their child for approved educational expenses through a digital platform. The purpose of the emergency clause is to allow the State Board of Education time to have the applications available by July 1, 2021.

I.C. 32-1012 explicitly recognizes the constitutional right of parents to direct and supervise their children's education. I.C. 33-107 and Article IX, Section 2 of the Idaho Constitution give the State Board supervision over public schools only.

I.C. 33-202, which provides that nonpublic students need to be instructed "in subjects commonly and usually taught in the public schools of the state." This bill is consistent with that existing code.

Section 1 of this bill reads: Nothing in sections 33-1030 through 33-1034, Idaho Code, shall be construed to give the state authority to regulate the education of nonpublic students.

FISCAL NOTE

The Strong Students Grant Program requests \$30 Million in one-time federal funds and \$5 million ongoing state general funds to include costs to administer the digital platform. This amount would fund up to 70,000 students. The Strong Students Scholarship Program requests \$5 million in ongoing state general funds. The average, per student amount spent in the 2019-20 school year was \$6713. At 90% funding, this bill would grant approximately 800 student scholarships of approximately \$6041. However, 2020-21 school year per student amount will be used when the program is implemented.

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DISCLAIMER: This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).