

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 03, 2021

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Crabtree, Senators Den Hartog, Woodward, Lent, Johnson, Cook, Ward-Engelking, and Nelson

**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 Thayn** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:02 p.m.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to approve the Minutes of February 22, 2021. **Senator Lent** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**Senator Cook** moved to approve the Minutes of February 23, 2021. **Senator Nelson** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**H 111** **Relating to School Personnel; Amends Idaho Code 33-514 to Provide That Certain Persons Shall Be Held at Category 3, and Idaho Code 33-515 to Revise Provisions Regarding Renewable Contracts.** **Quinn Perry**, Policy and Government Affairs Director, Idaho School Boards Association, outlined the bill for the Committee.

**TESTIMONY:** **Karen Pyron**, Trustee of the Butte County School District in Arco, Idaho, testified in support of **H 111**. **Ms. Pyron** said many districts in Idaho rely on content specialists to fill teaching positions. **H 111** will allow content specialists to remain as teachers with a Category 3 status if they aren't certified as teachers.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Cook** asked if someone could stay a teacher without getting the certificate. **Ms. Pyron** said the district would begin consideration by trying to figure out why someone who taught four or five years still does not have the certification. **Senator Cook** asked if the bill would stop someone from continuing to teach indefinitely without getting the certification. **Ms. Pyron** confirmed there was no language in the bill to do so.

**MOTION:** **Senator Woodward** moved to send **H 111** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Nelson** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**S 1117** **Relating to the Qualify Education Loan Assistance Program; to Provide Loan Repayment Assistance, Eligibility, Award Criteria and Protocols to Address Teacher Shortages in Idaho.** **Senator Ward-Engelking** and **Representative Sally Toone** outlined the bill to the Committee and handed out supporting material (see Attachment 1).

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Lent** asked about the source of the figures in the bill and how many other states have a similar program. **Representative Toone** said the data came from the State Department of Education. Twelve states have a program like this one in place; this bill is modeled after the one from Arizona, which has had moderate success with its program. **Senator Den Hartog** asked if a teacher would be able to obtain funding from the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program as well as this new program. **Representative Toone** said the federal program applies to teachers who have at least 10 years experience. This plan gives graduated funding during the first four years of teaching, to help bridge that gap.

**Vice Chairman Crabtree** asked what other industries have this type of loan forgiveness program. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said nursing programs and some apprenticeship programs have a monetary award. **Vice Chairman Crabtree** asked who funds these loan assistance programs. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said general funds are used for the nursing loan forgiveness programs, but most use private funding. **Chairman Thayn** asked about loan forgiveness versus grow your own programs which are designed to recruit, develop and retain teachers who are already in the community. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said she believes loan forgiveness enhances the grow your own programs.

**Senator Cook** asked why loan forgiveness was discontinued if it was in place years ago. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said insufficient revenue might have lead to the program discontinuance and the system might have employed enough teachers to avoid the need for the program. **Senator Cook** said perhaps a better program would be to give teacher bonuses or raise pay for teachers in rural areas. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said some teachers receive bonus pay for certain fields of teaching but most of that pay differential is only for one year. This bill would give money to teachers, over a four-year period, to hopefully incentivize them to stay in rural areas, where they are badly needed.

**TESTIMONY:** **Karen Pyron** and **Eva Selleck**, citizen, testified in support of **S 1117**. They said teachers need to be incentivized to stay in rural areas because so many leave for a better-paying job in a bigger city.

**MOTION:** **Senator Nelson** moved to send **S 1117** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** **Chairman Thayn** called for a roll call vote on the motion. **Senators Lent, Johnson, Ward-Engelking,** and **Nelson** voted aye. **Senators Den Hartog, Woodward, Cook, Vice Chairman Crabtree,** and **Chairman Thayn** voted nay. The motion failed.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

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Senator Thayn  
Chair

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Florence Lince  
Secretary