

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 28, 2022

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Marshall, Wisniewski, Galloway, Yamamoto, McCann, McCrostie, Berch, Toone

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Rep. Wisniewski

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the Committee secretary's office; following the end of the legislative session the sign-in sheet will be retained in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Clow called the meeting to order at 8:01 am.

H 669: **Rep. Moon** presented **H 669** which would create the Hope and Opportunity Scholarship Program. She shared how this legislation would enable education funding dollars to follow students and described how it would enable school choice. It was explained how this would enable parents to place their children in a school which best fits their need. Rep. Moon explained the fiscal note and how the funding would be placed into an Education Savings Account (ESA).

Rep. DeMordaunt discussed **H 669** and shared how it would enable parents to choose where their children should be educated and would not limit a child based on funding. She shared how **H 669** is constitutional and compared it to prior court decisions.

Jordan Zakery, State Relations Director, Education Choice, explained how ESA's work. He explained how this would allow parents to choose different educational products for their children to use. Mr. Zakery shared different research and studies which have been performed on ESA's.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Zakery** shared how this legislation would encourage schools to listen to parents and make changes to keep students.

Martin Lueken, Director of Fiscal Research and Education Center, Education Choice discussed the fiscal impact and future potential savings. He explained how they predict 1% of students might change schools.

David Hodges, Educational Choice Attorney, Institute for Justice, explained how **H 669** is not in contradiction with the United State nor Idaho Constitution's. He explained how this bill would give parents the money to spend on different programs and tuition.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Hodges** shared how this money could be used to send a child to a religious school.

Andy Grover, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators, **Dale Layne**, Lobbyist, Idaho Rural Schools Association, **Quinn Perry**, Deputy Director, Idaho School Boards of Association, **Paul Stark**, Executive Director, Idaho Education Association, and **Marilyn Whitney**, Deputy Superintendent for Communication and Policy, State Department of Education, voiced their opposition to **H 669**. They expressed concern how this legislation could take funding away from schools and have a negative impact on rural schools.

Tom Harrison, Program Coordinator, Idaho Parents for Educational Choice, **Carolyn Harrison**, Program Coordinator, Idaho Parents for Educational Choice, **Branden Durst**, **Kent Ebinger**, **Mandi Guy**, **Ryan Spoon**, **Kimber Green**, **Nicole Tralcel**, **Mia Benedict**, **Kristin Young**, **Morgan Lutgen**, **Russell Smerz**, **Dan Dunne**, and **David Worley**, voiced their support for **H 669**. They shared how this legislation would enable parents to choose where their child attends school. It was discussed how this would promote student learning.

Carolyn Holly Vice President, Idaho Business for Education, **Anne Ritter**, **Shawn Tiegs**, Superintendent, Nez Percé School District, **Annick Lund**, **Nancy Gregory**, President-Elect, Idaho School Boards Association, **Melanie Folwell**, **Alicia Abbott**, and **Julie Dahlgren**, voiced their opposition for **H 669**. There were questions brought up regarding the constitutionality of public tax dollars being used to fund private schools. They expressed concern how this legislation could take funding away from schools and how **H 669** has a lack of accountability.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:02 am.

Representative Clow
Chair

Elbia Christensen
Secretary