



Testimony of Jean M. Henscheid, President  
Senate State Affairs  
March 19, 2026  
Opposition to House Bill 872

Chair Guthrie, members of the committee. I will try to be quick given the overwhelming possibility that this bill will sail through this committee and through the chamber. My name is Jean Henscheid, president of the League of Women Voters of Idaho and I represent our statewide membership in opposition to House Bill 872. For 106 years, the League has kept watch over the election process, always on the lookout for anything that will make casting an informed ballot more difficult. The purpose of a separate form for amendments and issues is to signal to the voter that they are moving from choosing those who will represent them to engaging in direct democracy. This is an entirely different responsibility of American citizenship. The ballot initiative is one such issue that may end up on the reverse side of a list of candidates and is a good example of what voters are being asked to consider as direct actors in law making.

As described by Boston University law professor Portia Pedro, “[The initiative is a] mechanism [that] enables citizens to make laws, to create or eliminate rights, or to amend the state’s constitution through a popular vote. By allowing the universe of eligible voters to cast their ballots directly on a matter, instead of relying on their elected representatives to consider, advocate, and vote on behalf of the voters, the ballot initiative provides a more direct democracy.”

This weighty responsibility is required when considering any other amendment or issue. All would be subordinated by a “yes” vote today. It is ironic that this bill comes before you the day after a bill to add a new civics requirement to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum was heard in Senate Education. The League is 100 percent in agreement that the best citizens are informed citizens. Collapsing two responsibilities of citizenship into one will save money on copy paper. Will it grow better citizens in our state? No.