



Testimony on behalf of LWVID in support of HB 831

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Room WW55

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Chair Guthrie, members of the committee, again, for the record, my name is Jean Henscheid, president of the League of Women Voters of Idaho. I am delighted to report that our statewide membership supports HB 831, which both secures the safety of public-school students and provides additional polling places to accommodate Idaho's growing population of voters. Both outcomes are core to the work of the League and we thank the sponsor for bringing this forward. This sponsor worked with the Idaho School Boards Association, county clerks, and the Secretary of State's office in the drafting process. The constitutional right to a thorough, uniform, and general education for Idaho's children in grades K through 12 and the right to vote for eligible Idahoans are safeguarded here. The start date for providing instructional alternatives to students in impacted facilities has been set to 2028, a collaborative decision to accommodate the complexity of shifting schedules.

Beyond securing these constitutional rights, this legislation makes two other profound statements. First, the long-standing use of public schools as polling places is just one of the many ways these schools serve as the center of many communities. They are the Friday night lights, the band concerts, the community event centers, and the places where voting happens. This legislation is a reminder that our public schools aren't just buildings for students. Students who are provided alternative sites for learning will, we hope, be told that voting is so important that their schools will be turned over to accommodate this sacred right. It is the kind of civics lesson few books can replicate.

Thank you for your "yes" vote.