



**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MARCH 16, 2016  
TERRY RYAN, CEO OF THE IDAHO CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK**

**CHAIRMAN MORTIMER, VICE-CHAIR THAYN, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.**

**I AM TERRY RYAN AND I AM TESTIFYING HERE TODAY IN MY ROLE AS CEO OF THE IDAHO CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK.**

**THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK.**

**I'D LIKE TO SHARE A QUOTE FROM THE THAYN DOCTRINE, WHICH I THINK IS HIGHLY RELEVANT TO THE CONVERSATION AROUND THE LOCAL INNOVATION SCHOOL ACT: "THE HIGHEST FORM OF RESPECT IS TO LET PEOPLE MAKE CHOICES AND EXPERIENCE THE RESULTS OF THOSE CHOICES BE THEY POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE."**

**H057 SEEKS TO PROVIDE 10 SCHOOLS A YEAR (NOT MORE THAN 50 OVER FIVE YEARS) WITH THE SPACE AND FLEXIBILITY TO TRY SOME INNOVATIVE AND DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING.**

**NOTHING HERE REQUIRES ANY DISTRICT OR SCHOOL TO DO ANYTHING. IT SIMPLY ALLOWS AND ENCOURAGES THE CHOICE TO DO SO.**

**HOWEVER, IF PASSED BY THE SENATE, AND SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR, THIS WOULD ALSO MAKE CLEAR TO EDUCATORS ACROSS THE STATE YOU WANT TO SEE SOME LOCALLY OWNED AND MANAGED EFFORTS TO TRY NEW THINGS FOR THE BENEFIT OF KIDS.**

**THE TIME FOR THIS IS RIGHT. THE OPPORTUNITY IS DRIVEN BY RAPIDLY CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES THAT ENCOURAGE, SOME MIGHT SAY DEMAND, SCHOOLS TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY WHEN IT COMES TO: "SEAT TIME," "STUDENT ADVANCEMENT," "USE OF STAFF," "STAFF TIME" AND EVEN "HOURS OF OPERATION."**

**THERE ARE EDUCATORS IN NAMPА, MELBA, KUNA, SALMON, POCATELLO, AND IDAHO FALLS LEADING THE WAY IN EFFORTS TO CUSTOMIZE LEARNING FOR THEIR STUDENTS. THEY USE TERMS LIKE BLENDED LEARNING AND FLIPPED CLASSROOMS TO DESCRIBE THEIR EFFORTS TO FACILITATE THE ACQUISITION AND USE OF**

**KNOWLEDGE BY STUDENTS THAT IS SUDDENLY WIDELY ACCESSIBLE THROUGH CELL PHONES AND LAPTOPS.**

**BUT EDUCATION INNOVATORS ARE DOING THIS WORK IN A SYSTEM THAT STILL LARGELY ENCOURAGES COMMONALITY, STANDARDIZATION AND UNIFORMITY.**

**REPRESENTATIVE KIRBY NOTED LAST WEEK DURING THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING THAT THIS IS ALL A WORK IN PROGRESS. AS LESSONS ARE LEARNED FROM THE EARLY ADOPTERS THE LAW SHOULD TO BE MODIFIED AND IMPROVED IN COMING YEARS. THAT'S PART OF THE INNOVATION CYCLE.**

**OTHER STATES HAVE EMBRACED THE NOTION OF INNOVATION SCHOOLS. BOTH COLORADO AND INDIANA HAVE BEEN LEADERS IN THIS EFFORT. BOTH STATES ARE ALSO STRONG SUPPORTERS OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS.**

**THE RECENT PASSAGE OF THE "EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT" (ESSA) BY CONGRESS ENCOURAGES THIS SORT OF INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. IN WHAT COULD FAIRLY BE CALLED A REPUDIATION OF THE LAST 15 YEARS OF FEDERAL EDUCATION LAW, IN SUBSECTION (B)(2)(C), CONGRESS DIRECTS STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION TO "REDUCE BARRIERS AND PROVIDE OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY FOR SCHOOLS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES OR TARGETED SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES."**

**MY COLLEAGUES AND I HAVE BEEN IN FRONT OF YOU IN RECENT WEEKS MAKING THE CASE FOR GIVING PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS MORE FLEXIBILITY AROUND TEACHER CONTRACTS. I SUSPECT YOU'LL PROBABLY SEE US NEXT YEAR ARGUING FOR ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITIES IF WE CAN IDENTIFY SMART ONES THAT ALLOW CHARTERS TO TRY NEW THINGS FOR KIDS.**

**AFTER THE HOUSE EDUCATION HEARING ON THIS BILL I WAS ASKED BY A CHARTER FRIEND WHY I SUPPORTED SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR DISTRICT SCHOOLS TO INNOVATE AND COMPETE?**

**THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE AND REALLY COMES BACK TO SENATOR THAYN'S QUOTE: "THE HIGHEST FORM OF RESPECT IS TO LET PEOPLE MAKE CHOICES AND EXPERIENCE THE RESULTS OF THOSE CHOICES BE THEY POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE."**

**THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH YOU TODAY.**