

IN THE SENATE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 115

BY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

STATING FINDINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STAND-ALONE CIVICS STANDARDS FOR IDAHO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS.

Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

WHEREAS, civic engagement is the foundation of our nation's form of democratic government; and

WHEREAS, participation in civic activities is essential to sustain our form of government; and

WHEREAS, research shows that civic engagement has declined in the United States in recent years; and

WHEREAS, civics education is essential in ensuring that students are informed and effective citizens who understand their responsibilities and rights; and

WHEREAS, public schools should promote students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational principles of the American system of government, including the Constitution, rule of law, separation of powers, judicial review, and federalism; and

WHEREAS, Section 33-1602, Idaho Code, requires that instruction in citizenship shall be given in all elementary and secondary schools; and

WHEREAS, all secondary pupils must show they have met the state civics and government standards through the successful completion of a civics examination in order to graduate; and

WHEREAS, national studies have found that Idaho's social studies and civics standard should be strengthened to better prepare students to participate in civic life; and

WHEREAS, Idaho's social studies standards, where current standards on civics are incorporated, are scheduled for review and updates; and

WHEREAS, stand-alone civics standards would better support student understanding of our nation's system of government and the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship; and

WHEREAS, civics standards should emphasize the importance of an understanding of natural law as recognized by the American founders based on the works of Cicero and John Locke, which philosophy underpins the Declaration of Independence and the thinking of the founders.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-sixth Idaho Legislature, the Senate and the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the Legislature does hereby resolve to call upon the State Department of Education to work with a group of stakeholders, including parents, educators, education organizations, and legislators, to develop stand-alone standards for civics instruction that include the teaching of natural law in Idaho schools for consideration by the State Board of Education and the Legislature.