

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 14, 2022

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Lent, Senators Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Blair (Johnson), Cook, Ward-Engelking, and Nelson

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Thayn** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:03 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Lent** moved to approve the Minutes of February 15, 2022. **Senator Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

HCR 38: **Joe Stegner**, University of Idaho (UI) presented **HCR 38**. **Mr. Stegner** went over the proposed bill, explaining that this is an encouragement for the State Board of Education to request additional Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho (WWAMI) regional medical education seats beginning in 2025.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **HCR 38** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Lent** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 718: **Joe Stegner**, UI presented **H 718**, which adds to existing law to provide that students who attend medical school through the WWAMI program or who are in an Idaho slot at the University of Utah shall commit to practicing in Idaho or reimburse the state for supporting the student's medical education. **Representative Moyle** added that some of the background intention behind this legislation is to incentivize more students back to Idaho, as doctors. (See Attachment 1)

DISCUSSION: **Senator Crabtree** asked what the other states in the WWAMI program success rate was. **Representative Moyle** explained that the program has had success so far. He added that there is a provision that if they come back to Idaho, that they do their residency here. Additionally, another incentive is that the student will receive a half year credit.

Senator Nelson asked if the program was running long enough to produce any significant data. **Representative Moyle** replied that the program has moved throughout the participant states, and has shown signs of success.

Senator Blair inquired on what the need was for doctors in rural areas, and if this program was helping with that need. **Representative Moyle** explained that the rural areas are hurting right now, and this would incentivize students in the program.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if other trades, such as dentistry would do the same type of incentives for their program students. **Representative Moyle** stated that if we are not, then we should be, especially given the taxpayer subsidies.

Senator Ward-Engelking, expressed concern over the specialty residency programs in Idaho, and whether or not this would be a problem. **Representative Moyle** stated that once the student has completed their residency, regardless of the specialty, is when we ask for them to come back to Idaho.

- MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **H 718** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Blair** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senator Nelson** votes Nay.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** commented that she is in support of **H 718** to improve access to citizen health care.
Senator Ward-Engelking commented that she is concerned that we do not do this for other trades, therefore this may de-incentivize students.
Senator Nelson also expressed concern due to the fact that in-state tuition would come with a contract that the student had to come back to Idaho.
Chairman Thayne asked if **H 718** would apply to only new students, or ones entering into the WWAMI program. **Representative Moyle** replied that this would go into effect next year.
Senator Woodward commented that he is in support of this legislation by stating that producing a return on education provided is not a new concept, such as in the military.
Senator Blair commented that incentivizing students to stay in Idaho would be a return on taxpayer dollars.
Senator Cook asked if the student does not come back to Idaho, what would the pay back look like. **Representative Moyle** explained that there is no interest on the payback, and the contract is signed through the State Board of Education (SBOE).
- H 545:** **Emily McClure**, Idaho Charter School Network, presented **H 545** which relates to removing the Public Charter School Debt Reserve Fund and to provide for a revolving loan fund. **Ms. McClure** explained that one method that charter schools have had success with is a revolving loan fund that leverages private funds and incorporates a Community Development Financial institution or (CDF) fee. She stated that this recognized that growth is coming and private charities need more support.
Senator Blair made an inquiry as to why public schools were not included in this proposal. **Ms. McClure** responded that charter schools are a great way to model this, particularly in areas where a traditional public school cannot pass bonds or levies. She stated that this would have the question arise, if the public schools would have to forego that levy or bond in order to have a revolving loan fund. **Senator Ward-Engelking** stated that originally charter schools came about because of the idea that the state would not provide facilities, so if the intent is to provide for them, why wouldn't we do the same for traditional public schools. **Blake Youde**, Idaho Charter School Network explained that there is a gap between charter school and public school per students state funding support. (See Attachment 1)
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** asked if a charter school representative had gone to the districts and asked if they could participate in their local bond opportunities as a way to fund facilities. **Ms. McClure** replied that several different ideas have been discussed to provide charter schools with funding to get lower interest rates.
Senator Ward-Engelking asked for clarification if an amendment had been done to tie local levies and bonds to the reserve fund. **Ms. McClure** stated that discussions have been in progress, and attempts have been made to figure it out.
Senator Agenbroad testified on **H 545** with concerns about the state of Idaho using taxpayer dollars to become a lender for start up schools without an assurance of repayment.
Senator Den Hartog inquired on what the differences would be with what is currently done with the moral obligation bonding for the schools and what is being proposed in **H 545**. **Corey Phelps**, Idaho Housing and Finance Association explained that the credit enhancement of the moral obligation is to make sure that the benchmarks are met that are contained in statute. He explained that this would

have more of an underwriting component. **Senator Den Hartog** followed up with an inquiry on if this piece of legislation would be considered as a risky investment to the state. **Mr. Phelps** agreed that it would be.

Mark Carignan, Bluum testified in support of **H 545** because this fund would provide the most savings and is saves taxpayers money.

MOTION: **Senator Woodward** moved that **H 545** be held in committee. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Chairman Thayn** and **Senators Cook and Den Hartog** voted Nay.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **H 545** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion failed.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 4:02 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Katy Morden
Secretary