



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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A Weekly Legislative Report

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EDUCATION & RURAL SCHOOLS

Governor Brad Little, in his State of the State speech in January, made it very clear to legislators and the state of Idaho that he was going to invest dollars into public education. Even though the Governor has held the line on his 1% holdback in this fiscal year and his promise for a 2% holdback for next year, he has said all along “**education will be funded**”. H523 is Governor Little’s follow through to what he promised. **H523 establishes a new advanced professional rung on the career ladder**, beginning July 1, 2020, with one new allocation cell in the first year. H523 goes on to create four additional cells in the following four fiscal years. In addition to building out the advanced professional rung of five total, there will be increased allocations along with existing residency, professional, and advanced rungs in fiscal years 2022-2025. The following is how the build out looks per fiscal year:

FY2021: \$32,489,459
FY2022: \$35,828,006
FY2023: \$43,786,611
FY2024: \$51,708,403
FY2025: \$59,798,969

The projected total fiscal impact at the end of the five-year implementation is \$223,611,448. **The measure passed the Idaho House on February 28 by a vote of 52-10-8.** The measure is important to agriculture interests because of the impact on rural school districts throughout Idaho. It is difficult to attract teachers into remote areas of Idaho to work and raise a family. Idaho has also lost some of its best graduating teachers because of its non-competitive salaries with states that border Idaho. H523 puts Idaho in a competitive market for retaining teachers in the Gem State.

WILL IDAHO BE ABLE TO GROW HEMP?

The Senate passed S1345 that addresses this issue on February 27 by a vote of 27-5-3. Those Senators voting against this measure were Bayer, Brackett, Crabtree, Grow and Heider. The measure, which is an

agriculture issue, was expected to head to the House Ag Affairs Committee for a hearing. Late on Friday, February 28, Speaker of the House Bedke assigned the legislation to the **House State Affairs Committee** under the leadership of Chairman Steve Harris, Meridian. **Speaker Bedke has indicated that if the legislation is to go forward, it will take input from producers that they want the legislation.**

RETIREMENT AND SWITCHING HOUSES

As we move closer to the May Primary we are seeing more and more current legislators decide their path forward related to continued service as public officials. The list has continued to grow of those who have **announced retirements: Senators Brackett, Buckner-Webb, Cheatham, Hill, Jordan and Mortimer, and in the House, Representatives Anderson and Smith.** Members of the House who have indicated they will run for these vacant Senate seats are: Rep. Zito for Senator Brackett's position, Rep. Wintrow for Senator Buckner-Webb's and Rep. Ricks for Senator Hill's position. Senator Brent Hill has served 20 years in the legislature and has most recently held the position of President Pro-Tem of the Senate. With his retirement it will require the Senate coming together in December 2020 and selecting a new leader to preside over the Senate.

STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

HCR34, if it passes the legislature, would establish an Interim Study Committee made up of Senate and House members to undertake and complete a **study of state funding for public institutions of Higher Education.** While the Governor addressed significant increases for public education, the higher education budgets were held to the budget cutbacks along with other state agencies. One observation that has been mentioned by several members of the legislature this year is the **extreme cooperation and collaboration by the presidents of Idaho's higher education institutions.** When U of I President Scott Green was asked to comment about this collaborative effort he mentioned that **ISU President, Kevin Satterlee** has

led the charge. Idaho has a concern about the low go-on rate for high school students to seek education beyond High School. The go-on rate for several years has been less than 50% and has actually fallen in percent in recent years. This is a concern to leaders in Higher Education who see students leaving Idaho to attend schools out of state where enticements for tuition and scholarships are more readily available.

TRANSMITTAL DATE

Tuesday, March 3 is referred to as **Transmittal Date** for the legislature. At the close of this day all House bills must have been considered and voted on by the House and all Senate bills considered and voted on by the Senate. This is to keep the machinery of the legislature moving forward. We have just completed week 8 of the 2020 legislative session. To date, **665 pieces of legislation** have been prepared and 429 bills have been introduced. This is running close to the 2018 session, which is usually how it plays out in an election year. Legislators want to take something back to their constituents that showed they worked hard in Boise. 429 bills have actually been introduced in both houses and 53 Resolutions, Memorials or Proclamations. **Both Houses have passed a total of 45 bills and 14 Resolutions and Memorials.** Polls are starting to surface around the Capitol as to an adjournment date. That being said there is a lot of work to be done. Appropriation bills are beginning to make their way to the floor for consideration – this is a good sign that adjournment is ahead. **The Governor has signed 30 bills into law at this time and 15 are officially awaiting his signature.**

CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Senator Dave Lent and CTE Administrator Clay Long presented to Food Producers of Idaho membership to discuss the continued support of Career Technical Education (CTE) and the benefits of legislation they are helping through the process. S1329 would address longstanding equity issues associated with recruitment and retention of industry professionals within CTE programs and identifies three areas to improve CTE instruction throughout the state. It recognizes and values CTE instructional staff's experience within the industry by identifying a ratio for placement on the teacher career ladder. The existing allocation for CTE instructional staff holding an **occupational specialist certificate** be directed to the instructional staff rather than being placed in a school district's general fund and identifies a new individualized path for industry professionals that has been streamlined to allow a more efficient route to occupational certification.

Idaho has made good progress in recent years allowing an easier path forward for students to transfer credit, increasing the number of CTE instructors in

high school and college programs and creating pathways connecting students to high demand careers. Statewide data shows that **students who take CTE classes in high school “go-on” to college at a higher rate, over 60%, and many enter CTE-related professions including health care, technology and trade fields.** There are areas that need improvement and there is still a significant demand for a skilled workforce in Idaho. The current priorities for CTE include improving access, creating more capacity for more students and better career placement after graduation. These priorities align with the governor's overall goal to train and retain a highly trained workforce and encourage former Idahoans to return to our state to live, thrive and contribute. It also aligns with the State Board of Education's goal that 60% of Idahoans, aged 25-34, will have a professional certificate or college degree. **S1329 passed the Senate 35-0 and will now be heard in the House.**

LIA CLASS 40 GOVERNOR SPEECHES

Each year the LIA Class selects individuals to speak before the Governor on the broad topic “If I were Governor of the State of Idaho this is what I would do for Idaho Agriculture”. From that starting point the participants can select a number of different topics of their choice. This year the five making a presentation before the Governor were the following:

Devin Fielding, Shelley

“Hope for the Eternal Optimist”

Branden Schiess, Filer

“Population Growth Encroaching on AG Lands in Idaho”

Dave Reynolds, Kuna

“Let Common Sense Reign”

Cori Wittman Stitt, Lapwai

“Rebranding Agriculture in the Climate Discussion”

Jen Cummins, Boise

“Seeking Idaho's Best & Brightest for Idaho Ag”

At the close of each presentation, Governor Little made comments related to the subject that had been presented. Each participant in the class was presented a current copy of the Blue Book signed by Governor Little and Secretary of State Denny.

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