



IVC Legislative Update

JANUARY 28, 2010

SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF IDAHO'S 160TH CONGRESS

In this update:

1. *IVC's top priorities for Idaho's Children*
2. *Legislation, to date: Status of relevant bills*
3. *Watch List: A review of impactful bills and key legislators*

Welcome back to session!

Regular communication with your customers lets them know how much you value them and their business. Show them that you care by offering valuable information such as tips on how to use your products and services more effectively, event announcements, information on upcoming new products and expanded services, and special discounts on existing ones.

IVC 2010 Policy Priorities

Child Health & Safety: *Priorities from Corey Stuber*

1. Avoid cuts to children's coverage that would threaten access to primary care & preventive services and result in additional downstream costs (such as emergency room utilization).
2. Improve Idaho's childhood immunization rates. There are several pieces at work here. First is the need to ensure sustainable funding and access vaccines at the lowest possible rate. Along these lines, a bill has been proposed (which Saint Al's is supporting) to impose an "assessment" or fee on insurance companies based on the number of children on their insurance plans, and that money would go into a state vaccine fund that would pool together private/public funding to purchase all vaccines for the state at the lowest possible federal rate. The insurers are supporting this bill as well. The sunset date for the temporary funding granted by Gov. Otter last summer is 1/31/10, but we are hearing that Health & Welfare has identified 2 additional months of funding so we have a little more time to get the bill passed and begin collecting the funds from insurance companies.
3. There needs to be a coordinated strategy to improve vaccination rates. One part of this strategy is addressed in a proposed bill that would change Idaho's immunization registry (IRIS) from an "opt-in" where parents must choose to have their children's immunization information entered in the registry, to an "opt-out" where immunization info is automatically collected unless the parents opt out. This should provide some improvement. Another piece of increasing rates is the proposed creation of a state immunization policy commission.

Chris Stuber, chair of IVC's Health Policy Workgroup, is tracking all of these issues and can keep you updated on them. She would anticipate the immunization funding bill will easily pass, and hopefully the opt-out bill will as well. There may be resistance to forming a new commission in light of the current climate where commissions are being closed down.

Early Learning legislation: *Notes from Chris Loucks*

The two major items that we wanted included in our Race to the Top grant submission: to collect data on students as soon as they enter the system and to include early learning as a priority. We would have liked Pre-k for everyone, but high need students need it most and the benefits are greatest for those students. Most of the grant doesn't focus on these two areas, but these areas are in the grant.

Data will be collected as students enter the system for P-16. That will give Idahoans data to determine if students with prekindergarten have a different level of achievement than students without pre-K. It will also show over time if students with pre-K are less likely to repeat classes, *ceteris paribus*, etc. Second, Tom Luna established a priority for early childhood education for high need students, emphasizing all aspects of early childhood development and strengthening pre-K programs for high need students.

Child Welfare legislation: *A letter from Evelyn Mason*

As the Idaho Legislature continues to approve cuts for programs that affect children, families and people with disabilities we need to keep an eye on the bigger picture.

Please look at the attached document outlining the changes on funding for children in the US and how stimulus dollars are effecting changes. With Idaho school districts being allowed to reduce the special education budgets this year, what will happen once the Stimulus money goes away. Especially when we are seeing cuts to Medicaid budgets and programs while at the same time education budgets are being cut? Are our elected leaders really thinking all this through?

Thanks,

Evelyn Mason
Idaho Parents Unlimited

Idaho Voices for
Children is a proud
member of Voices for
America's Children

Idaho Voices for Children

PO Box 8882

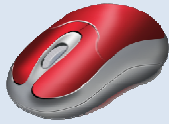
Boise, ID 83707

208.336.8993

info@idahovoices.org

We're on the Web!

www.idahovoices.org



Legislation Introduced to Date

In the first few weeks of the session, a couple of bills have been introduced that may have an impact on Idaho's kids.

Senate Bill 1288: This legislation would prevent changes to child custody orders while a military parent is on a tour of duty.

Senate Bill 1290: Set to increase the maximum sentence from 10 to 20 years for persons convicted of causing injury to a child.



Watch List



The key legislators that are in a position to advance – or set back – legislation for kids are:

Finally, delete any features that you won't be using. Once you're done with these general changes, save the result as a Word template.

Use your voice to contact your legislators

We urge you to talk to your legislator about bills currently under their consideration.

For Idaho legislators' contact information, [click here](#).

If you are not sure who your legislator is, [click here](#).



Work in Progress

We are seeing progress in Idaho. In pursuing positive policy for children, Idaho Voices for Children lists the following successes:

Data Systems to Support Instruction, C(3) Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, drop out or complete P-16 education problems. This is in pilot now; the system will be fully operational by school year 2010-2011.

Accessing and using State data

By 2011, the SDE will establish policies and governance structures to support a P-20 and workforce data system. We will form an advisory group for developing and recommending clear reporting rules and operational policies, and we will create a statewide data dictionary.

By 2010, the SDE will develop a data warehouse for PK-Workforce data. This a centralized P-20 and workforce data warehouse that is connected with collaborative projects at Idaho institutes of higher education and the Idaho Department of Labor. It will be accompanied by a reporting and analysis system based on the P-20 data system.

Invitational Priority: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications that include practices, strategies, or programs to improve education outcomes for high-need students who are young children (prekindergarten through third grade) by enhancing the quality of preschool programs. Of particular interest are proposals that support practices that (i) improve school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive); and (ii) improve the transition between preschool and kindergarten.

Become a child advocate today!

- Donate to IVC and receive regular legislative updates.
- Support our work and lend your voice in support of Idaho's 374,000 children (Idaho Kids Count 2007)

Donate by visiting our website, www.idahovoices.org/support/join.htm

