



3rd Legislative Update

February 9, 2009

Legislative Links

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Idaho State Legislature
2009 Legislative Session

Budget takes center stage; fewer bills introduced

Four weeks into the 2009 Legislative Session and the main topic of conversation at the Capitol Annex continues to be the budget. It also feels like the session is getting off to a slow start--there are fewer pieces of legislation to track so far this year, and anything with a fiscal note is undergoing serious scrutiny.

Update on IVC's 2009 Early Learning Policy Priority

IVC's 2009 policy priority for Early Learning is to work towards the establishment of a committee to provide a means to bring together legislative leaders, executive branch representatives, and key stakeholders concerned with the early learning of young children (ages 0-5 years) in Idaho and begin the work towards establishing an early learning blueprint for Idaho. [Click here to read a one-page document explaining why we need this committee.](#)

What's going on right now? On Thursday Feb. 5th, the chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees allowed John Watts, IVC Lobbyist, and David High, IVC Vice President, to make a presentation to each committee as a follow-up to Paul Headlee's presentation of the LSO report "[An Inventory of Government-Funded Early Childhood Development and Education Programs in Idaho.](#)"

What are we trying to do? We are encouraging members of the House and Senate Education Committees to have the proposal printed so it can be circulated and discussed by lawmakers as an official legislative document.

Moving Forward: We want to keep up the contacts with the House and Senate Education Committees. If your legislator is on the House or Senate Education Committee (see list below), please call them and express your support for having the Idaho Voices for Children proposal printed so the issue can be discussed in a committee hearing.

Thank you again to everyone who has already called or written to Rep. Nonini and Sen. Goedde encouraging them to have this draft printed. We will keep you informed of any movement on this issue.

Members of the House Education Committee (call 208-332-1148 to reach committee secretary Claudia Howell)	
Chair Bob Nonini (Dist. 5 - Coeur d'Alene)	Rep. Jim Marriott (District 28 - Blackfoot)
Vice Chair Mack Shirley (Dist. 34 - Rexburg)	Rep. Pete Nielsen (District 22 - Mountain Home)
Rep. Sharon Block (District 24 - Twin Falls)	Rep. Stephen Hartgen (District 23 - Twin Falls)
Rep. Donna Boe (District 30, Pocatello)	Rep. Donna Pence (District 25 - Gooding)
Rep. Marge Chadderdon (District 4, Coeur d'Alene)	Rep. Paul Shepherd (District 8 - Riggins)
Rep. Liz Chavez (District 7 - Lewiston)	Rep. Steven Thayne (District 11 - Emmett)
Rep. Sue Chew (District 17 - Boise)	Rep. Jeff Thompson (District 33 - Idaho Falls)
Rep. Branden Durst (District 18 - Boise)	Rep. Tom Trail (District 6 - Moscow)
Rep. Marc Gibbs (District 31 - Grace)	Rep. Richard Wills (District 22 - Glenns Ferry)
Members of the Senate Education Committee (call 208-332-1321 to reach committee secretary Sara Pealy)	
Chair John Goedde (Dist. 4 - Coeur d'Alene)	Sen. Monty Pearce (Dist. 9 - New Plymouth)
Vice Chair Dean Mortimer (Dist. 32 - Idaho Falls)	Sen. Richard Sagness (Substitute for Sen. Edgar Malepeai, Dist. 30 - Pocatello)
Sen. John Andreason (Dist. 15 - Boise)	Sen. Gary Schroeder (Dist. 6 - Moscow)
Sen. Russ Fulcher (Dist. 21 - Meridian)	Sen. Chuck Winder (Dist. 14 - Boise)
Sen. Kate Kelly (Dist. 18 - Boise)	

National Health Care News - SCHIP

On the healthcare front, there was good news at the national level on Wednesday, February 4th when President Obama signed a bill to expand the SCHIP program by approximately \$35 billion over the next 5 years. "I refuse to accept that millions of our children fail to reach their full potential because we fail to meet their basic needs. In a decent society, there are certain obligations that are not subject to trade-offs or negotiations, and health care for our children is one of those obligations," Obama said.

[Click here to read the full article.](#)

Status of proposed IVC Child Welfare legislation

IVC's 2009 policy priority for Child Welfare includes reforming the Idaho de facto custodian provisions to (1) better define the circumstances under which an individual has standing as a de facto custodian, (2) better define how de facto custodians can pursue custody of a child, and (3) what legal rights are accorded the de facto custodian when custody is granted by the court.

John Watts and various IVC volunteers are working closely on draft legislation with Senator Denton Darrington (R - Declo), Chair of the Senate Judiciary & Rules Committee, who has agreed to be the main sponsor for this proposed legislation. Legal experts are meeting this week to work on the draft as well. We'll keep you posted as this proposed legislation moves forward.

Emerging Issues

IVC is researching possible initiatives to strengthen sentencing in child abuse cases. We will report back to you after the session on our findings and the IVC Policy Workgroup on Emerging Issues will make recommendations to the IVC Board on a possible course of action for the 2010 Legislative Session. Of course, the big issue this session is the budget, and we will be monitoring the work of JFAC and letting you know how their work affects children.

IVC's 2009 Policy Priorities

[Click here](#) to see the full "IVC 2009 Policy Priorities" document, which includes a list of our overarching beliefs and 3 - 5 year goals.

Legislative Tracking 2009

H = House bill
S = Senate bill

Early Learning

<p>S1023 Sponsor: Sen. Bock</p>	<p>Prekindergarten - The purpose of this bill is to reduce the age at which children may be enrolled in public schools and, thereby, effectively authorize, but not require, public school districts to establish prekindergarten programs. This bill also provides that (i) public school districts shall not make prekindergarten programs compulsory; and (ii) there would be no state appropriation for the provision of prekindergarten programs. This bill includes housekeeping amendments to relevant statutes where the reference to "prekindergarten" programs to align those statutes with the possible creation of prekindergarten programs.</p>	<p>Senate Education Committee</p>
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K-12 Education

<p>H0025 Sponsor: Rep. Thayne</p>	<p>Kindergarten mastery, requirements - This bill encourages parents of kindergarten age children to meet with their kindergarten teacher prior to the beginning of the school year to discuss what the child needs to learn in kindergarten. The parents can then choose to send their child to public kindergarten or to choose another option including home kindergarten. If the child does not go to public kindergarten and is able to pass the postkindergarten assessment (to be developed by the State Board), the parents and the school district will both receive a portion of the state funds allocated for public kindergarten students (each would receive one fourth of the total funds). The purpose is to stimulate a parent teacher partnership, encourage parental involvement, and provide for early identification of students with remediation needs.</p>	<p>House Ways & Means Committee</p>
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K-12 Education (continued)

<p>H0058 Sponsor: Rep. Jarvis</p>	<p>School attendance, parent/guardian role - This legislation amends Section 33202 of the Idaho Code to change the legal dropout age from age sixteen to age eighteen. An exception has been added where a child has successfully graduated from a public, private or parochial high school, or has successfully passed a general educational development (GED) test or similar assessment, or has been otherwise comparably instructed.</p>	<p>House Education Committee</p>
<p>HCR007 Sponsor: Rep. Thayn</p>	<p>Public ed, innovative practices - A resolution to identify broad policies that may improve the K through 12 Public Education system in times of budget shortfalls including: grade acceleration, early graduation, parental empowerment and flexibility.</p>	<p>House Education Committee</p>
<p>S1017 Sponsor: Kirtlan Naylor</p>	<p>School attendance, requirements - This proposed amendment to Idaho Code clarifies under what circumstances a child may be found to suffer educational neglect by tying this term to the compulsory education requirements of Idaho Code. The new language will provide guidance to parents, child protection case workers, and the courts in applying this standard. Additionally, this proposed amendment to Idaho Code adds language which refers to a child being taught at home by his or her parent or guardian. It specifically authorizes home education as an alternative to public, private or parochial school attendance, or other comparable instruction. The addition of public charter schools (including online or virtual charter schools) to the other options of public, private or parochial schools incorporates current technology and expands the available options for child education.</p>	<p>Senate 3rd Reading</p>
<p>Child Welfare</p>		
<p>S1034 Sponsor: Sen. Schroeder</p>	<p>Sex offenders, minimum sentencing - The purpose of this legislation is to provide mandatory minimum penalties for persons who commit any lewd or lascivious act or acts upon or with the body or any part or member thereof of a minor child less than 12 years of age</p>	<p>Senate Judiciary & Rules Committee</p>

Stay tuned for our next Legislative Update!



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- 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

This legislative report has been sent to all *Idaho Voices for Children* members. If you have questions or wish to remove your name from this mailing list, email Sara Herring at sara@idahovoices.org or call 208. 336. 5533 x 233

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