



Idaho State Senate Minority Offices

State Capitol
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0081

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Democratic Education Committee Members Reject Luna's Proposed Legislation

Boise – After three days of public testimony and thousands of emails overwhelmingly opposing legislation that would destabilize Idaho's educational system, today Democratic Senate Education Committee members are standing with Idahoans and calling for the rejection of SB 1068 and 1069. Senate Minority Leader and ranking Education Committee Democrat Edgar Malepeai said, "In this debate, two undeniable truths emerged - class size matters and education is a team sport. We think government has to be a team sport too."

Senator Malepeai sent a letter to Senate Education Committee Chairman John Goedde on Friday indicating his unwillingness to sanction making "small changes" to a plan that was flawed from the start given the lack of input from parents, students, the Idaho Education Association (representing 13,000 Idaho teachers), the PTA, the State School Boards Association, higher education experts or even the State Board of Education.

As developed by Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna, with the backing of Governor Otter, this plan "offers Idahoans a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach to educating our individually unique children in varied classroom settings," said Senator Nicole LeFavour. "Superintendent Luna misread the November elections, which were well funded by out-of-state online education contributors, as a mandate to experiment with our children," LeFavour added. Said Malepeai, "If that is what voters intended, why are we seeing over 90% of our citizens repudiating the increased class sizes upon which Superintendent Luna's plan was built?"

"In my ten years as a legislator, I have never seen such a spontaneous outpouring of public sentiment in opposition to a proposal as I've seen against Tom Luna's plan to eliminate experienced teachers and increase class sizes," said Senator Malepeai.

Senator LeFavour, also a member of the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee, expressed concerns about the threat to education funding resulting from the on-going \$128 million in cuts from 2010 and this year's proposed \$65 million in additional cuts. "None of these budgetary realities appear to be considered in Tom Luna's plans," she said. "Eliminating 1,000 education professionals will do more than devastate our schools, it will devastate our economy."

For more information, contact:

Senator Edgar Malepeai, 208-251-9517, emalepeai@senate.idaho.gov
Senator Nicole LeFavour, 208-724-0468, nlefavour@senate.idaho.gov

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