



April 3, 2013

Idaho State Senate

SENATOR JOHN W. GOEDDE

Hello friends and neighbors,

It has been another exciting year in the Legislature and I want to thank you for the opportunity to let me represent you; it has been a great honor. With the 2013 session behind us, I wanted to share with you some thoughts and comments on the year's activity.

Idaho's economy is slowly coming back with projected growth of around 3%. This has allowed the legislature to restore funding in some areas where cuts were made to accommodate lower revenues during the recession but government cannot be allowed to simply expand into its old footprint. The efficiencies found during tough times are lessons to be carried forward. With that said, our first effort must be to restore funding to education so less supplemental levies will be needed locally.

Despite the repeal of education reforms in November, groups on both sides of the reform issue found some common ground upon which to restore some portions of that work. Many districts have moved forward on their own in the technology arena and the state will help with further funding for districts to use as they see appropriate. A small pilot grant program is established to foster innovative opportunities for teachers and students across the state as well. Most stakeholders agreed to use, on a one time basis, funds for Awards for Excellence in Education, a program for differentiated pay established at a local level in concert with teachers, trustees, and administrators. These funds next year can be used to fund recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Education Improvement.

Because of process issues, I lead the successful charge to kill the education budget on the floor of the Senate. The budget was proposed including a number of statutory changes where the public and 84 fellow legislators were excluded from any input. While the revised budget came back intact, at least those portions changing Idaho code were readdressed in the open with public comment as they should be.

School safety became a high level issue after the events at Sandy Hook. The Governor appointed ISP retired Col. Russell to coordinate planning and response activities with local law enforcement, the Department of Education started a longer term effort which will start with school culture issues, and the legislature dealt with making opportunities available for enhanced training of school personnel. Every school building in Idaho has unique challenges in safety and all parties must do their best to assure the safety of your young people as they seek an education.

As in prior years, the Legislature heard much public testimony on many issues. Your testimony, letters, emails and phone calls helped the legislature resolve many difficult issues this session. I would personally like to thank all of you who contacted me about how legislation would affect you or Idaho.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Goedde".

John W. Goedde
Idaho State Senate