

Education For All

Policy Action Network

Dedicated to Providing Education Choice to Idaho Families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2018

Contact: Blake Youde

(208) 696-9447

Blake.Youde@YoudeLLC.com

IDAHO HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE INTRODUCES GEM SCHOLARSHIP LEGISLATION

(Boise). The Idaho House Education Committee voted today to introduce legislation establishing the GEM Scholarship Act. The legislation establishes the GEM Scholarship to provide families of eligible elementary and secondary school students with new choices to pursue their child's education. The legislation, which was introduced by Representative John Vander Woude (R - Nampa), allows families of eligible students to apply for a scholarship to pay for education programs outside the state's traditional public education system.

"The goal of this legislation is to provide education choice opportunities to students and families who traditionally have needed a variety of education options to find success in the classroom," said Representative John Vander Woude.

To be eligible, a student must be: (i) a student from a low-income household, (ii) a student with special needs, (iii) a student who is considered at-risk, or (iv) a child of active duty military personnel. Additionally, the student may not be enrolled full time in public education.

The amount of the scholarship cannot exceed the amount of state public education funding per pupil. GEM Scholarship recipients can use the funds to pay for a variety of education services, including but not limited to: (i) tuition, fees and uniforms to attend an accredited elementary or secondary private school; (ii) tuition and fees for nonpublic online learning programs; (iii) tutoring; and (iv) educational services and therapies.

"We have good public schools in Idaho. However, we also have students who have tried repeatedly to make it work in their local public school, but it is not the right fit. Students deserve to be in an education environment that best suits them. This legislation provides education choices, including private education, to find success in the classroom, particularly for those students and families who do not have the means to explore those choices on their own," Vander Woude continued.

The House Education will schedule full hearing on the legislation and vote whether or not the entire House of Representatives should consider the proposal.

Education for All Policy Action Network is an Idaho nonprofit organization formed to support statewide education choice proposals.

####