

Michelle

STENNETT

Idaho State Senate, Minority Caucus Chair



## Legislative News

WEEK EIGHT

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 4

Two of Superintendent Luna's education bills ([S1108](#) and [S1110](#)) passed out of the House Education Committee this week, but thankfully the third of his bills, [S1113](#), will likely be held in the Senate Education Committee indefinitely. Chairman Goedde stated on Tuesday, "I don't see any effort to move 1113 forward at this point." There are rumors that a revised version of the bill will emerge in coming weeks, but it sounds more likely that a task force will be established to investigate the issues raised around this bill, and that the legislation will be re-visited in the 2012 session. I am happy to hear that the committee agreed that the bill in its current form is not ready for implementation in our classrooms, and that further research and dialogue on its provisions are necessary before the legislature can vote them into law. Enhancing student performance in our state is no simple task, and we must evaluate with careful scrutiny the consequences of proposals to introduce laptops, online courses, larger classes, and fewer teachers in our education system. I look forward to seeing the results of a future task force on this topic and hope that the public has ample opportunity to participate in its discussions.

Of course, the news about S1113 puts into question the other two pieces of education legislation that are now making their way to the House floor for a final vote. Luna's three bills are all interconnected and were introduced to the legislature as a *package*. Also, S1110 is fiscally dependent on the General Fund, which has no money in this budget crisis. It is not responsible policy-making to enact a bill that has no financial backing. The expected cuts to K-12 education are estimated at around \$62 million, although we continue to await the final budget decisions from the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC). And remember, this is *on top of* the more than \$200 million cut already. I will keep you posted as we learn more about the budget situation in coming weeks.

A bill that will affect ski patrollers passed the Senate today

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unanimously after weeks of negotiations and amending. [S1021a](#) simply clarifies the current law which provides a legal exception for the practice of medicine without a license for ski patrol staff. It was previously assumed that ski patrollers fell under the section that described those providing free emergency aid but the new language will leave no room for doubt. The bill specifies that a ski patroller under this exception must be a member of the National Ski Patrol System, Inc., be certified in outdoor emergency care (OEC), provide medical care in accordance with their training, and exercise that care on those participating in ski-related recreational activities within designated ski areas in Idaho. I think that makes it pretty clear! I applaud the bipartisan effort to make this bill amenable to all and the intent of this bill to protect and reaffirm the service of our ski patrollers as valuable medics on our mountains.

Finally, I'm happy to announce that my [POW/MIA flag bill](#) passed the Senate with unanimous approval today and will now be transferred to the House. I appreciate the input offered by Senator Mitch Toryanski (R-Boise) and veterans in the community for helping me perfect the requirements in this bill so that all are satisfied with the result. The POW/MIA flag above our Statehouse still flies high and proud, and with enactment of my bill, the flag will be allowed to indefinitely maintain its place at official buildings across Idaho as a symbol of appreciation for those brave men and women that are Prisoners of War or Missing in Action.

*As always, I welcome any suggestions or comments you have to offer. It is my honor to serve District 25. I can be reached by calling (208) 332-1353 or toll-free 1-800-626-0471, via email at [mstennett@senate.idaho.gov](mailto:mstennett@senate.idaho.gov), or by mail to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720. I apologize if the delivery of this email was unwelcome. If you have moved from the district or would simply prefer to no longer receive these emails, please reply to this email with the word "Unsubscribe" in the Subject line. Thank you for your understanding.*

