

2017 ISBA RESOLUTION NO. 9

OPPOSITION TO AMENDING ARTICLE IX SECTION V OF THE IDAHO CONSTITUTION, KNOWN AS THE BLAINE AMENDMENT

WHEREAS, the Idaho State Constitution provides for “the free and thorough public education for children”; and

WHEREAS, the Idaho State Constitution as amended by the Blaine Amendment ensures the separation of church and state in Idaho by prohibiting the flow of public money to private or religious institutions for education; and

WHEREAS, school districts receiving public funds from the Legislature are required to meet accounting and student achievement standards for those funds; and

WHEREAS, an additional layer of state oversight would have to be created to account for the use of public money distributed to either individual families or to private or religious institutions; and

WHEREAS, language found in House Joint Resolution 1 from the 2016 legislative session amending Article IX, Section V, Idaho Code, also known as the Blaine Amendment, would inevitably increase Idaho’s educational costs as students already enrolled in private education access state funds. If, for example, the 11,262 children in Idaho current attending private schools received state funds through a scholarship, tax-credit, or voucher for just \$3500 annually, the impact to the education budget would be \$39.4 million; and

WHEREAS, Idaho’s students have increasing access to a wide variety of school choice options in the State of Idaho, and parents are free to choose educational services through Idaho’s public education system or educational options in the private sector; and

WHEREAS, in other areas of the country that have adopted voucher programs, student achievement has suffered, especially among those children receiving vouchers; and

WHEREAS, in the 2016 Gallup Education poll, 63% of those surveyed opposed vouchers;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association opposes amending the Constitution of the State of Idaho, Article IX, Section V, also known as the Blaine Amendment, to allow public dollars to finance private or parochial education in the K-12 education system of the State of Idaho.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We oppose amending The Idaho State Constitution, Article IX, Section V, also known as the Blaine Amendment, for the reasons outlined above. Idaho already has substantial choice in its public school system. A voucher, tax-credit, or scholarship program will cause irreparable harm to the existing system of public schools and will likely harm overall student achievement.

Submitted by Boise School District No. 1

Submitted by Pocatello/Chubbuck School District No. 25

PASSED

AYES	3773
NAYES	93
TOTAL	3866