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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HB 415: Mis-Prioritization Misses the Mark**

Idaho House Bill 415 would remove local control from elected school boards to determine which, if any, staff would be allowed to carry firearms on campus. The legislation would allow school staff members who have an enhanced concealed weapons permit to legally carry on school grounds. There is no doubt in my mind Representative Hill, and those who support this bill, care deeply about the safety of our students and staff. However, this legislation is a drastic mis-prioritization of statewide school safety initiatives with a focus on response over prevention.

Using the F.B.I.'s definition of an active shooter and their data on K-12 active shooter events, we know nearly 95% of K-12 active shooters are current or former students of the targeted school. This means we have the potential to prevent 95% of these attacks by proactively identifying students on the pathway to violence and providing early interventions. This is further supported by reports from the Secret Service indicating juvenile offenders who target a school leak their ideations and plans at a higher rate than other offenders.

Idaho has no mandate for publicly funded schools to establish behavioral threat assessment teams; nor does it require standards for how those teams conduct threat assessments. Utah recently passed legislation mandating school threat assessment teams and requiring schools use the Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guide (CSTAG). CSTAG is an evidence-based threat assessment model that is used by more K-12 schools in the U.S. than any other system. HB 415 prioritizes responding to an event once students have already been murdered over proactively establishing protocols to prevent an attack from taking place. This bill misses the mark by 95%.

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education stated lockdown only response protocols were not enough recommending options-based protocols as best-practice. According to recent data from the Idaho School Safety & Security Program, the majority of Idaho K-12 schools are still using a lockdown only approach. The state should mandate schools adopt an options-based response protocol and prohibit them from using the word lockdown in emergency announcements. The state should create standards

for trauma-informed drills and drill documentation. This bill misses the mark by demonstrating a deliberate indifference in aligning our state to emergent research and best-practice recommendations in active shooter response.

While having a School Resource Officer (SRO) in every school may not be financially feasible, establishing a standard for SROs is. Idaho has yet to define an SRO. Without defining an SRO, we cannot establish training standards for those whose number one responsibility is student safety. Legislators who care so deeply about our children should demand nothing but the highest standards for officers and deputies assigned to these roles. This bill misses the mark by lowering the standard to protect our students to an enhanced CCW class rather than raising the bar for sworn peace officers.

Representative Hill, and those who support this legislation, have demonstrated their resolve to protect our students and educators. I thank you for that commitment. However, these efforts are focused in the wrong areas. Equip schools with the resources to identify and support at risk students. Empower stakeholders to be prepared by having multiple response options. Invest in School Resource Officers who have dedicated themselves to protecting our educational facilities.

On behalf of the Board of the Idaho Association of School Resource Officers and its' 200 Idaho SRO members, we oppose House Bill 415. We ask our elected representatives to represent our voice, and the voices of our communities, by voting against HB 415 and to prioritize evidence-based school safety measures.

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