



December 7, 2017

The Honorable Michael D. Crapo
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
483 Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Raul Labrador
1523 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael Simpson
2084 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Crapo, Senator Risch, Representative Labrador and Representative Simpson,

We write you regarding the convening Conference Committee and subsequent report that will reconcile the pending House (H.R. 1) and Senate (H.R. 1 As Amended) tax reform measures. We oppose the following provisions, which would have damaging consequences for Idaho public colleges and universities and the students they serve.

- **Elimination of the Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits, and the student loan interest tax deduction.** These tax incentives are critical to helping make higher education more accessible and affordable for Idahoans.
- **Taxing of tuition waivers for employees and students.** Treating a waived expense as income for tax purposes is a counterintuitive and punitive policy which would have a dramatic chilling effect on employees who seek to take classes as professional development and graduate students who perform teaching and research.
- **Limitations on higher education bonding options, including advanced refinancing and private activity bonds.** The Advanced Refundable Bond is a financing vehicle that provides favorable interest rates, reducing the overall cost of much needed infrastructure projects that directly benefit our students and faculty. State investment in higher education facility maintenance and construction has not come anywhere close to keeping pace with growth and demand on our campuses, so private-activity bonds can be used as an alternate form of financing construction for campus capital projects.
- **Increasing Standard Deduction.** The increase would undoubtedly reduce the number of people who itemize charitable deductions and reduce charitable giving to not-for-profit entities such as public colleges and universities.
- **Unrelated Business Income Tax.** Requiring computation of UBIT separately would treat various activities across an institution as unique silos and disallow losses from one activity or program to offset gains in another for tax purposes.

We hope that you and your colleagues will take the time necessary to consider the wide-ranging effects of such broad and complex legislation. We urge you to continue to protect current provisions of the tax code which enable Idahoans to better themselves through education.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of us if we can be of assistance.



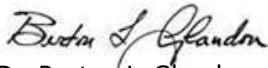
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