



IDAHO FREEDOM FOUNDATION

SECOND COLLEGE BUDGET IS NOT AN IMPROVEMENT

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The Idaho House rejected Senate Bill 1179, the college and university budget, in a 13-57 vote. The lopsided rejection reflected, among other things, no meaningful reductions to address universities' propensity to use public money to advance social activism, critical race theory, and a generally leftist world view. In addition many credible stories emerged of conservative-leaning students suffering intimidation and verbal harassment.

Fast forward to April 27. The Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC) approved a budget motion that includes a \$2.5 million line item reduction due to social justice programs as follows: \$1.5 million at BSU, \$500,000 each at ISU and and the U of I. The overall reduction from SB1179 is \$1.566 million. So far, so good.

However, this budget still falls woefully short of what is needed to rein in the social justice activism at our universities. For starters, the Idaho Freedom Foundation identified over \$20 million in social justice spending at universities. It must also be mentioned that universities are poised to receive \$49.4 million in federal funding under the CARES Act and another \$87.1 million under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). So while the reductions are an important step, they will not impact universities' operations in any way.

The final budget motion also stripped away specific language that was included in SB1179. Although the motion makers had intended to include this language, it was rejected. Why is this important? **Because the original language actually required the State Board of Education to verify that "no public funds are or will be used to support social justice ideology in student activities, clubs, events and organizations on campus."** Perhaps this language didn't go far enough by including the actual instructional environment, but never-the-less it's gone.

So we are left with a bill that is still a net increase in university budgets but with no intent language thwarting social justice activism. **HB377 is a prohibition against compelling students to believe discriminatory ideologies but does not prevent Idaho's universities from spending millions of taxpayer dollars to promote them.** That's why rejecting the second iteration of university budgets is a necessary step to ending the war against Western civilization.