

January 6, 2020

The Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature convened today in Boise. The first item of business was a joint session to hear Governor Little's State of the State and Budget Address.

During his address Governor Little touted the successes of his first year in office and laid out the goals for the future. Governor Little highlighted his administration reductions in regulations, his continued commitment to educational programs, and push for a more transparent government. Over the last year, Governor Little and his team led by Division of Financial Management Administrator Alex Adams decreased state regulations to allow businesses and individuals to grow without the unreasonable rules. Under the direction of Governor Little, 75% of the administrative codes have been reduced, in the words of Governor Little, "reduce regulatory frictions." The governor also reaffirmed his commitment to reducing unnecessary and helping in with the announcement of an executive order Zero-Base Regulation to build off of the Licensing Freedom Act.

Looking at Tax policy Little announced his continuing commitment to offer Grocery Tax Relief, by tapping the tax relief fund created last year to fund the \$35 million cost of repealing sales tax on food.

Governor Little said that Education and Career technical Programs will continue to be a focus of his administration. Announcing budget plans to allocate \$6 million expanding new Career Technical programs at eastern Idaho college, Lewis and Clark College, and at the department of juvenal corrections as well as stating the commitment of his office to continue and build the success of the advance opportunity scholarship. He also said his budget will keep his administration's commitment to teachers by offer resources to address the unique challenges facing our community.

On Health Care his budget implements a full year of Medicaid Expansion with a net-zero impact on the General Fund. Utilizing offsets in the budgets for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, the Department of Correction, the courts, and the Catastrophic Health Care Fund, as well as tapping the Millennium Fund to help cover the state share. He is also asking the counties to bring the offsets in their budgets to the table, as Medicaid Expansion begins to pay for services the counties used to cover.

He also touted Idaho becoming the first state in the nation to make "enhanced short-term plans" available, "offering more options to individuals and families priced out of the market by Obamacare."

Little committed to working with legislators to continue advancing rural industries and businesses and seeking to ensure kids growing up in Idaho have the opportunity and incentive to stay in Idaho and encourage those that have left to come back.

The full text of the speech and the budget highlights prepared by Governor Little's office are attached.