



**For Immediate Release
March 28, 2019**

Contact: Rep. Megan Blanksma
(208) 590-0703

Republican Leadership Introduces Bill That Addresses Concerns With Updating Referendum Process

BOISE, Idaho – In our ongoing efforts to address the concerns of Idahoans everywhere, Republican leadership introduced House Bill 296 today in the House Ways & Means Committee to address comments and concerns with Senate Bill 1159. HB 296 would change the number of districts required for initiative qualification to 2/3 of Idaho’s legislative districts and increase the time for signature collection to 270 days.

“These changes are an effort to address public concerns about overburdening citizens with signature requirements, while preserving the voice of rural Idahoans,” said Speaker of the House Scott Bedke. “We have a legislative responsibility to look at policy to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all Idahoans, and these two pieces of legislation do that.”

Both SB 1159 and HB 296 are a result of work in both the House and the Senate to preserve the right of initiatives to serve as the voice of the Idaho voters rather than have the process subverted by outside interests and well-funded out of state entities.

“Most Idahoans agree that initiatives should have a solid vetting process, or we would run all legislation through initiatives. You elect leaders you trust to do that work for you,” said Majority Caucus Chair Rep. Megan Blanksma. “However, the initiative process is important, and these changes still allow for the process to take place in a more clearly defined and equitable way.”

The complementing pieces of legislation moving forward are supported by recent polling data showing bi-partisan support to preserve the rural vote and protect the initiative process for the Idaho voter rather than external special interest groups.

###