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TRACEY KOELLISCH RESPONDS TO GOVERNOR LITTLE'S VETO OF SB1381 – PROTECTING IDAHOANS AGAINST VACCINE MANDATES AND DISCRIMINATION

Eagle, Idaho, (March 29, 2022) – The Idaho Legislature passed SB1381 known as the “Coronavirus Pause Act” on March 18, 2022. This bill provides Idahoans with a one-year pause from employers forcing Covid-19 vaccinations on their employees and from businesses refusing to provide services to Idahoans based off their vaccine status. Unfortunately, Governor Little vetoed this bill yesterday stating, “I am a lifelong advocate of limited government, and SB1381 significantly expands government overreach into the private sector.” However, “This line of reasoning is glaringly inconsistent with his actions as Governor Little has expanded government in the private sector during the 2022 Legislative Session,” Koellisch said. For instance, HB 701 which the Governor signed into law the same day in which he vetoed SB1381, created a brand-new Idaho Workforce Housing Fund of \$50 Million to subsidize workforce housing for workers across Idaho. Moreover, Governor Little also signed SB1408 into law appropriating Childcare Infrastructure Grants in the amount of \$15 Million. Interestingly, the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry (IACI) supports both SB1408 and HB701 but decries that prohibiting businesses from requiring vaccine mandates would put “tyrannical practices on the free market.” Simply put, Governor Little seems to support redistributive government intervention programs advocated by lobbyists and special interest groups but does not support Idahoans making their own healthcare decisions. This is unacceptable.

The Idaho Republican Party unanimously passed Resolution 2021-49 authored by Koellisch last summer requesting the Legislature reconvene and “pass legislation that protects Idahoans against coercive vaccine mandates that go against the conscience of Idahoans, to remain in harmony with the National and Idaho Republican Party Platforms and the State Constitution.” “The Idaho Republican Party spoke in one voice asking the Legislature to end vaccine mandates, which the Legislature addressed in SB1381, yet the Governor continues to subjugate individual rights over big business,” Koellisch stated. The Legislature must override Governor Little’s veto. Idahoans cannot afford to go another year with coercive vaccine mandates or face discrimination based off their vaccine status. It’s time for Idahoans to be represented by their legislators and not special interests.

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