

# Member profile: Idaho Representative Wendy Horman

2016 Chair, CSG West Education and Workforce Development Committee

By Jeff Miller, CSG West Policy Analyst  
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Like many women in politics, Idaho Representative Wendy Horman never seriously considered running for office until she was asked. But as the mother of five children in public schools (who at one point had 47 different teachers) Horman had a well-informed perspective on the local school system. One Wednesday she got a call from a school board member, who invited her to run for an opening on the board. The filing deadline was Friday. Horman thought about it for two days, filed, and won the seat. She served on the board for eleven years.

## Priorities

While serving on the school board, Rep. Horman's school district was part of a university-based study which demonstrated that school board members can have an impact on student achievement. This experience led her to co-author a training program for Idaho school board members, called "Leadership for Student Achievement," which she presented at the annual meeting of National School Boards Association. That success, in turn, eventually led her to introduce a bill to that authorized funding to support training for school board members and requires school districts and charter schools to develop and implement strategic plans to improve student performance. These were two of the 20 recommendations made by Governor Butch Otter's 2013 education task force.

School safety and security is another priority for Rep. Horman. This year she sponsored the Idaho School Safety and Security Act, which establishes a state office of school safe-



## In brief: Rep. Wendy Horman

- ✓ Member of the Idaho House of Representatives since 2013.
- ✓ Alumnus of CSG West Western Legislative Academy Class of 2014.
- ✓ Former president of the Idaho School Boards Association.
- ✓ Member of the Governing Institute's Women in Government Leadership Program Class of 2016
- ✓ Has been a small business owner, stay-at-home mom, charter school network auditor, school board trainer and organ instructor.

ty, Under the act, school buildings will be assessed for safety and security vulnerabilities every three years. The office will also establish standards for school security that will address both physical plant and school climate.

## The Future

During her first term in the Legislature, Rep. Horman served on the education committee and helped develop a new career ladder for teachers. Although no longer a member of that committee, she now serves on a joint committee tasked with overhauling Idaho's education funding formula over the next few years. She expects the state will invest over \$350 million in the Governor's strategic plan for education by the time it is completed. If reelected later this year, she anticipates a busy few years.



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Rep. Horman stays connected to her constituents, saying “Probably the most important job we have as a legislator is to listen.” She holds weekly conference calls with superintendents in her district and speaks with teachers as often as possible. She is a commissioner for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and the Education Commission of the States, and a board member of Education Northwest and the University of Idaho's McClure Center for Public Policy Research. As if that weren't enough, she is actively involved in efforts to establish a new community college in her county.