

To the Readers of the Coeur d'Alene Press,

Education is often hailed as the great equalizer, providing people with the tools they need to succeed in their personal and professional lives. However, the recent failure of our district's two levies will result in significant cuts to our public educational institutions, depriving students of the necessary resources to pursue their dreams. The diversity of our schools, which is currently offering students a plethora of extracurricular activities and elective programs to explore their interests, is now being severely compromised. The loss of these programs will have a far-reaching impact on our students, depriving them of the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. For instance, the student who has been actively involved in theater since their freshman year will no longer have the chance to explore their artistic interests. Similarly, the student-athlete who aspires to play at the Division One level will find their chances significantly reduced due to the lack of games. Moreover, the student interested in Career Technical Education will be unable to pursue the career they once had a chance to. These losses are not only significant in terms of individual growth and development, but also signify a setback to the quality of education we can offer to our students. By rejecting the levy, we are not choosing fiscal responsibility; instead, we are compelling our students to abandon their pursuits and interests.

In light of the March 14th election results, we would like to address the substantial amount of misinformation spread regarding what the Supplemental Levy entails. The primary focus of the levy is to provide our school district with the proper funding for teacher salaries, extracurriculars, technology, and other essentials for operation. Parts of our community have expressed concerns about the potential presence of a biologically and presenting male in women's restrooms. This issue could become even more prominent given the decreased number of campus security officers (CSOs) provided by the school district as a result of the levy continuing not to be passed. Continuing down this path puts a quarter of our current staff's jobs in jeopardy, including teachers, bus drivers, school nurses, CSOs, SROs, and other essential personnel. Sports such as football, basketball, and baseball will receive less funding – therefore less games, worse equipment, and less administration. Extracurriculars like theater, band, debate, arts, and many others will either be entirely discontinued or will have severely lessened contents.

Very few students will be able to represent our community in major events such as District, State, and National competitions. Lastly, If the levy continues to fail, our schools will face a shortage of technology and personal devices, which play a crucial role in enabling schools to operate efficiently and effectively and are essential for students' learning and communication. One prime example of indispensable technology is the Chromebook. Students rely on Chromebooks daily to access online learning programs, complete homework assignments, and take exams. Ensuring the availability of these essential tools is vital for fostering an engaging and productive learning environment. It's imperative that we still have these opportunities for us students to prosper, have freedom, and become educated for the future.

While there are concerns over taxes being raised due to the passing of the levy (about \$110 in taxes for \$550k of taxable property), there is promising news; a bill is likely to pass in the Idaho state legislature, which will allocate \$100 million from the state sales tax fund (without raising taxes) to all Idaho school districts based on attendance, specifically to cover bond and levy payments for citizens. This means that if both the levy and the bill pass, CDA families and homeowners would not face any property tax increases. It would give our community the chance to help our youth whilst having no extra costs. It is important to remember that the levy would provide the CDA School District with the remaining 25% of its base funding. This money is essential for the proper functioning of our schools. Currently, the CDA School District operates with less money than almost any other comparable district in the country. Ranking 51st in the nation, Idaho's average funding per student is \$9,114, and the CDA School District receives even less than that, with only \$8,311.54 allocated per student. This lack of funding significantly impacts the quality of education our students receive, including access to safe schools, diverse elective options, adequate classrooms, and essential services such as school nurses. By not passing the levy, the CDA community is sending a clear message that they value a small, potentially nonexistent tax increase over the substantial benefits of a well-funded education system provided to our students. The costs of threatening the futures of us, the students, and the future of the city, far outweighs any costs that come with a very slight property tax.

In solidarity with our devoted teachers and staff, we're planning a walk-out on March 24th, the Friday before spring break. We will walk out at 2:05 PM, 25 minutes before school

ends; one minute for every million dollars that the school will lose if the levy doesn't pass, and one minute for every percentage of the budget that will be taken away. It's important to note that this walkout is not meant to show that our education is unnecessary, nor that we are ungrateful for what we have. Instead, it is to demonstrate that there is no point to education with no support of our community. We cannot have a complete, rounded education without the additional funding the supplementary levy would bring us, and we, the students know this to be true. We will demonstrate our collective agreement upon this by walking on Friday. We invite CHS, Venture, and all other schools in our district to stand with us by participating in a walk-out at their own campuses on March 24th at 2:05PM.

We ask that all members of our community consider the repercussions of this outcome. We ask you to remember the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the youth who call this county home. The hopes of the student pursuing theater as their passion, the basketball player with dreams of greater things, and the students looking for a future in technical education. Please, let us work together to build a brighter future for Coeur d'Alene. A school system that is not supported by its students, teachers, AND wider community is doomed to fail. We already have the students and the teachers, all we need is you.

Authored by,

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Signed by ### Students