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Debbie Critchfield  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Idaho State Department of Education  
650 W. State Street  
Boise, ID 83702

November 21st, 2024

Dear Superintendent Critchfield,

I am writing to express my deep disappointment and concern regarding PragerU that is being pushed forward. It is clear that this program will have detrimental effects on the students of Idaho. As an Idaho educator/administrator, I strongly believe that this program does not prioritize the best interests of Idaho's students and may, in fact, harm them in ways that will have long-term consequences. I am profoundly concerned with your endorsement of the PragerU materials about Indigenous Peoples of America and I strongly urge you to pause and consult with the tribal nations of Idaho and other communities, schools, and higher education institutions that serve Native American students.

PragerU is a gross misrepresentation of historical facts. It culturally stereotypes people of color. While I am disappointed in the endorsement by your department of this program and what this means for the dignity, identity and respect that your department should have for the tribal nations of the state of Idaho, I am more concerned for the non-native students of Idaho who will continue to not have true and accurate educational learning opportunities about people of color, Indigenous peoples, and the history of the United States of America. In fact, as an educator/administrator in the state of Idaho who has a doctorate in curriculum and instruction, and who has an understanding of the foundational premise of critical race theory, the endorsement of this program is the potential indoctrination the Idaho government touted about.

To counteract this, it is essential for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers to collaborate with Indigenous communities to ensure that curricula are accurate, respectful, and inclusive. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into all subjects, not just history, and addressing the contemporary realities of Indigenous peoples are crucial steps toward dismantling stereotypes and promoting understanding. Furthermore, it is critical that the State of Idaho, IN GOOD FAITH, consult with the tribal nations of Idaho.

Given the significant implications for Idaho's education system, I urge you to reconsider moving forward with this program. I hope that you will take my concerns seriously and engage in an open dialogue with those most affected by this program — the Tribes, Native students, parents, and educators of Idaho. We all want to see our students thrive, and I believe with thoughtful consideration, we can work together to find a better solution. You and I both are in the profession and position to educate the students of Idaho and stand up for what is just and right. I will continue to advocate for the students of Idaho, especially the Indigenous youth. I hope you will join me.

Sincerely,

Dr. D'Lisa Penney  
Idaho State School Administrator  
Nez Perce Tribal Member  
University of Idaho American Indian Studies Program Affiliate Faculty