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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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I.E.A. REFUSES TO DEBATE BLUMENFELD

Idaho Education Association President Joyce Raasch on Monday April 28, 1986 declined an invitation to debate education author Samuel L. Blumenfeld on May 27th in Boise. The invitation was sent over a month in advance.

Blumenfeld, author of seven books - six on education - will be in Boise as part of an American Opinion Speakers Bureau tour. Kelly Kitchens, Boise, Chairman for the event, said today that Ms. Raasch did not give any reason for declining the debate.

The topic of the debate was to have been: "A teacher's union -NEA/IEA- is good for public education in the US/Idaho". Raasch was to have spoken for the "yes", Blumenfeld for the "no" position.

Blumenfeld most recently debated former Secretary of Education Terrel Bell on the N.B.C. "Today Show" March 19, 1986. John Palmer of the "Today Show" introduced Blumenfeld as one "who specializes in the future of the nation's education structure."

Kitchens pointed out that in November 1984 the I.E.A. also declined to debate with Blumenfeld when he visited Boise. He added that the I.E.A. also declined to send a representative to a T.V. program seen in October 1985 on Channel 6 where education

problems were discussed. No reason was given for declining these two events either, as far as Kitchens has been able to determine.

For the May 27th debate Kitchens said, "the I.E.A. was invited to send any representative of its choice from its membership of some 8000. The I.E.A. apparently could not find even one member willing to attend.

Kitchens related that in the past 18 months, while speaking on tours in approximately 150 cities across the U.S., Blumenfeld has debated, or appeared with, many teacher's union representatives. He debated the elected Vice President of the National Education Association (N.E.A.) over radio in Baltimore in September 1984. He has debated officials of N.E.A. state affiliates in numerous states (Michigan, Florida, Massachusetts, California and many more).

Contacted, Tuesday, while on tour in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Boston resident Blumenfeld said, "I can't understand why, of all the many states I've been in, only the Idaho Education Association refuses to participate in some form of discussion with me. Perhaps the I.E.A. is something to hide, or is too embarrassed about its past record to let that record stand up to public scrutiny."

Kitchens said he will attempt to find another public education spokesman willing to debate the problems of the school system with Mr. Blumenfeld.

Blumenfeld's book "N.E.A. Trojan Horse in American Education" has sold nearly 50,000 copies since its release in September 1984. His "Is Public Education Necessary?" released in September 1985, has sold nearly 10,000 copies in the last seven months.

Blumenfeld is currently writing his eighth book. It is on death education in the public schools and its relationship to the current epidemic of teen suicide.