



Contact me:

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My top priorities:

- Ensuring adequate investments in K-12, higher, and early childhood education
- Positioning Idaho for a 21st-century global economy and job growth
- Protecting clean air & water, public lands and open spaces
- Advancing a clean energy future through energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy sources.

Capitol Tours

I provided Statehouse tours for any interested constituents on six consecutive Fridays during the legislative session. The 1.5-hour tours took citizens behind the scenes, offering a close-up look at how the Legislature works and how people can get involved. Tours also feature interesting tidbits about the Capitol Building and its recent restoration.

Contact me if you (or a group you're involved in) is interested in a tour of the Statehouse.

Cutting Critical Budgets vs. Investing in Idaho: Key Theme in 2010 Session

Facing another year of budget shortfalls, high unemployment, and drastic cuts to human services, the Legislature failed to protect critical investments in Idaho's future, making decisions that will likely prove to be penny wise and pound foolish.

K-12 schools were cut by an unprecedented 7.8%— a decision that may result in school closures in certain districts, teacher layoffs, crowded classrooms, and reduced services for at-risk children. Another key economic driver, our colleges and universities, again saw sharply reduced budgets, leading to higher fees and making college inaccessible to thousands of high school graduates. And cuts to various health and welfare programs will worsen the effects of the recession for tens of thousands of Idaho families.

This session, I joined my Democratic colleagues in sponsoring a series of bills promoting job creation—a package we called Idaho Jobs and Opportunity Blueprint (IJOBS). Forward thinking legislation designed to bring Idaho into the 21st century and focus our attention on the urgency of our economic situation, the bills were met with resistance or indifference and will not become law.

Instead, the majority pushed more than a dozen bills intended to pick fights with or even sue the federal government. The majority voted to denounce the Healthcare Reform bill but did nothing to provide state solutions for the uninsured and underinsured.

According to legislative budget analysts, the cuts that were made may cost Idaho more than 5,000 private (over)



In April, I graduated from the Legislative Energy Horizon Institute, Washington, D.C. I was one of 40 legislators from around the Western U.S. and Canada selected to participate in the 9-month program.

Legislation I've Been Working On

SB 1354 (Schools Renewable Energy Bill): I was a co-sponsor on this bill, which authorized school districts to build and operate thermal energy systems and sell any excess energy generated. SIGNED INTO LAW.

H 525 (Film Industry Fund): I co-sponsored this bill, which would facilitate greater incentives for the film industry by enabling the Film Rebate Fund to raise non-tax revenue. SIGNED INTO LAW.

H 486: Mountain Biking Plate: I sponsored this bill,

which creates a motor vehicle plate promoting mountain biking in Idaho. This plate will raise money for the cash-strapped Department of Parks and Recreation and their trail maintenance work. SIGNED INTO LAW.

Idaho Entrepreneur Finance Act: I sponsored this bill (w/ Rep. Max Black), which would create a \$30 million venture capital fund using private (non-taxpayer) money. Investors in the fund would receive a guaranteed rate of return that would be secured by contingent tax

credits. This model was successfully used in Utah to grow their technology industries. The bill had an informational hearing in the Business Committee but was not printed. I intend to advance it in 2011.

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE): I drafted this bill, which did not receive a hearing, in an effort to bring this innovative financing tool for residential and commercial clean energy installations to Idaho. Many other states and cities are pursuing PACE aggressively, (over)



Don't forget to vote!

Primary Election is on May 25! You can find registration and polling information at: www.idahovotes.gov

Cronin Campaign:

I would love to have your help in running for re-election this year. Volunteers are needed for fundraising, data entry, doorknocking, calling, and general office work. If interested, please contact me at brian@votecronin.com



Got an idea for a bill?

I welcome and appreciate any and all suggestions for legislation that I might pursue (and that hopefully you would be willing to help me with). Several of the issues I'm working on (see article) were brought to me by constituents. I look forward to hearing from you.

Highlights of the 2010 Legislative Session

Constitutional Amendments: HJR4 and HJR5 propose amendments to the Idaho Constitution (which you will vote on in November) that allow airports and public hospitals to incur debt that is payable through facility revenues and not taxes. This will be a boon for Boise's airport.

Immunization Progress: H432 creates a board to assess all health insurance companies in order to create a fund to purchase vaccines for insured children, allowing them and the state to access CDC purchasing discounts.

H495aa creates a Childhood Immunizations Policy Commission to work on improving immunization rates. S1335 also seeks to improve immunization rates by making the Immunization Reminder Info System (IRIS) an "opt-out" system for parents.

Higher Ed Stabilization Fund: Though this bill was perhaps "too little, too late," I supported the idea of creating a strategic reserve to minimize the impact of economic downturns on Idaho's colleges and universities.

Idaho Public Television: When Gov. Otter threatened to phase out all funding for IPTV, public outcry prompted the Legislature to only cut funding by 16%. Factoring in a federal grant, funding will be down 8.3%

Seniors Farmer Market Nutrition Program: H513 brings Idaho into compliance with the Federal Food Stamp Act to enable federal funds to flow to Idaho, such that low-income seniors could use coupons to pay for eligible foods at farmer's markets, roadside stands and CSA programs.

Budget Cuts vs. Investment (continued)

and public sector jobs. As such, we're likely putting even more people in a position of seeking state assistance in order to meet their basic needs.

The important point to remember is that we had options—options to pursue revenue to close some of our budget gaps. Possibilities included delaying election consolidation; hiring more tax

auditors to go after money owed to the state; reviewing the hundreds of millions of dollars in special interest sales tax exemptions; collecting an Internet sales tax to level the playing field for locally owned businesses; and delaying the expansion of the grocery tax credit, to name a few.

My greatest fear is that the decisions we've made to cut costs go beyond simply

"rightsizing" government or trimming "bloated" programs. Idaho government was running quite lean as it was. Rather, the choice to focus entirely on cuts and not look at revenue puts us further in the hole in terms of needed human capital and infrastructure investments. Such disinvestment further threatens our competitiveness as a state, which should have all of us worried.

Legislation I'm Working On (continued)

which helps home and business owners to access favorable rates and terms in pursuing efficiency upgrades, solar arrays, geothermal heat pumps, etc. I will continue working on this in the interim and 2011.

Industrial Hemp Bill: I co-sponsored this bill in an effort to give rural Idaho a tremendous economic development tool in allowing the cultivation of industrial hemp. The Agri-

cultural Committee voted not to introduce the bill. Rep. Eric Anderson and I will work on this issue in the interim.

HJM 12 (Campaign Finance Memorial): Amid numerous misguided "message bills" telling the federal government what to do, I drafted a bill urging Congress to take action in response to the Supreme Court's reckless *Citizens United v. FEC* decision, lifting

all limits on corporate and union political independent expenditures. After two hearings, the bill was printed in State Affairs Committee. BILL HELD IN COMMITTEE.

Grocer Tax Incentive for Purchasing Local Food: I am exploring this complex issue with different interested parties and colleagues. I hope to get a hearing in 2011.