

## Guest Editorial—Senator Joyce Broadword

Recently I set off a media firestorm by proposing legislation in the Idaho Senate that would terminate the Idaho Women's Commission. There have been many suggestions regarding my motives that are disappointing in the least, but repugnant to me as a legislator and a woman at worst.

We are facing the toughest budgetary year since I was elected to the Legislature five years ago. I have colleagues who have been in this body for decades who tell me they have never faced challenges such as we see every day in the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee, also known as JFAC.

There is not a day where my Senate and House colleagues do not consider budget cuts that could, heaven forbid, entail matters of life and death; of basic services in education for our children under potential threat. Not a day has gone by for weeks without admonition from the Governor and leadership from both houses to find any way possible to divert money from 'nice' programs to put into the ones which are necessary.

I am of the opinion that taxpayers' dollars are precious and because of this I consider our current situation with all the seriousness that it deserves. We must find savings so as to buttress health and welfare, education and public safety.

I believe the majority of citizens would agree with me that all bodies, commissions and task force committees need to periodically look at their purpose to see if their original goals and objections have been reached. In this case, the commission, established in 1965, has branched out into many areas that are not aligned with its primary goal as set out in statute. Much has changed in our country for women since Lyndon Johnson was president. There was one woman senators in Idaho during the 1965 session and today there are 8.

What have not changed are the needs of our children and of the neediest members of our society. If we do our jobs as legislators and suggest places where savings can be found, only be told immediately that this that or the other program is a sacred cow; who are we kidding?

A suggestion for newly targeted commissions or task forces that find themselves under consideration for elimination would be to come back to this body with new legislation and let the Legislature determine if the group is fulfilling a vital need—one not covered by other agencies, groups or programs. If it they are, then I am sure it will get funded.

Until that time, I will continue, as I expect all my Senate and House colleagues will continue, to try finding ways to minimize the impact of this national crisis on our schools and on our citizens and I will do so resolutely.