



**Idaho State Senate**  
**Idaho House of Representatives**  
Democratic Leadership

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*News release from the Idaho Legislature's Minority Leadership*  
For immediate release - Tuesday, January 12, 2010

**Legislative Democrats Offer Vision for Recovery, Prosperity**

BOISE – Democrats in the Idaho State Legislature responded to Gov. C. L. “Butch” Otter’s State of the State speech with a vision of opportunity and prosperity. With the right leadership, they said, Idaho can rebound from the current recession, create good jobs and build a 21<sup>st</sup> century education system.

“During the last decade,” said Senate Minority Leader Kate Kelly, “Republicans have hijacked the future of our children and squandered good economic times, only to be left with a fragile economy when times got tough. Idaho businesses are closing, we’re bleeding jobs, people are losing their homes, and families are struggling to pay their bills.”

Kelly and House Minority Leader John Rusche said the proposals put forth by the Governor and Republican leadership will make the situation worse and put public health and safety at risk.

Rusche pointed out that in the last two years Idaho has lost nearly 70,000 jobs. “One in five Idahoans is either unemployed or underemployed,” he said. “Recovering those jobs – and saving the ones we have left – must be our top priority.”

The Democratic leaders called for enhanced opportunity and capital for small business, giving local leaders the tools they need to improve their communities, and investing in education.

“Make no mistake,” Kelly said, “your children and grandchildren will be hurt even more if this Governor and Idaho’s Republican leadership continue their assault on neighborhood schools and higher education.”

The leaders estimated that if the proposed cuts are made, more than two-thirds of Idaho’s school districts will be forced to declare financial emergencies, and that already low graduation rates and other indicators will sink even further. “This is not the way to attract businesses to our state,” Kelly said. “This is not the way to build our economy.”

Rusche called for a commitment to a more efficient state government and a future that reflects “the Idaho values of individual freedom and responsibility, hard work, community and family.”

Kelly said Idaho shouldn’t cut investments that have a positive return. “Attracting good jobs is about much, much more than tax breaks. It is about good schools, low cost energy, recreational and tourism opportunities, and easy access on-line, on the road and in the air.”

“We see a future of opportunity, good jobs, economic growth and prosperity,” the leaders concluded. “A future where our children will get a world-class education that draws employers here. A future where our students can afford to go to college and stay in Idaho for rewarding careers.”

“We invite all Idahoans to join us in this vision.”

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