

You Have Been Invited to Leave the Idaho GOP

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Are you willing to sign a loyalty oath just to run for office?

Do you oppose the work of Idaho's congressional delegation to protect Idaho wilderness and guarantee future access?

Are gold and silver the currency you use to run your business?

Do you want to prevent local governments from improving your community?

Like most Idahoans, you probably answer “no” to all of those questions. You also probably don't believe that a small, vocal minority of fiercely right wing extremists should set the agenda for our entire state government.

Yet that is what we face thanks to recent decisions by a handful of extreme right wing leaders in the Idaho Republican Party. At their recent convention, they passed platform planks embracing all of the proposals outlined above as well as a demand that a Republican candidate who won a contested primary race, withdraw because he has a record of working with Democrats and Independents to solve problems.

The fringe element now running the Idaho Republican Party went so far as to call for an end to public schools, the diversion of scarce state resources to create and operate a private state militia and the continuation of state tax support for certain poorly run charter schools now awash in red ink.

If you are an independent, clear-thinking voter with a commitment to moderate, pragmatic and limited state government, the extremists now running the Idaho Republican Party are moving that party ever further away from you.

In fact, if you don't agree with them on every single issue, you have been invited to leave. Not surprisingly, an increasing number of folks are inclined to get out now while the getting is good because the Idaho GOP no longer represents their views.

You have options. Whether you support independents, third-party candidates or Democrats, you can send a clear message that the extreme, right wing fringe of the Idaho Republican Party cannot rule this state any longer. I urge you to spend the next four months evaluating all candidates for state and local offices. Look closely to see which ones actually support your core views and values, your desire for cost effective government and your belief that elected officials should have some plain common sense.

I'm pleased to say that the Idaho Democratic Party has outstanding candidates who have shown that they can best represent Idaho and our unique way of life. Walt Minnick is Idaho's independent, fiscally responsible voice in Washington, D.C., looking out for interests of the middle class and the future of our children. Keith Allred is a pragmatic, consensus building problem solver who can ride and shoot every bit as well as Butch Otter but knows how to think

and talk at the same time as well. Stan Olsen is an educator and administrator whose tenure as superintendent of one of Idaho's largest school districts has won praise throughout the state and nation. He will bring to the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction something we've been missing these past eight years: experience, knowledge and professionalism. Our legislative candidates have proven themselves ready, willing and able to work with their fellow legislators, regardless of party, to get the job done for our state and its people.

It is time we all sent a message to Idaho's GOP: We the people are tired of one party rule and your loyalty oaths, and your arrogant disregard of Idaho's voters is insulting to the independent spirit of our state and its people. It is time that Idaho voters return to the strong, two party system that made this state so independent, so proud and so full of optimism and common sense. Take a good look at our Democratic candidates this year. I think you'll like what you see.