

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 9, 2010

Media Contact – Lawrence Denney (208) 550-0738

Representative Hart Won't Serve on Revenue and Taxation Committee for 2011, 2012 Legislative Sessions

Idaho House Speaker Lawrence Denney announced Tuesday that Rep. Phil Hart (R-Athol) will not serve on the Revenue and Taxation Committee for the 2011 and 2012 legislative sessions, citing a letter he received from the north Idaho lawmaker requesting to be removed from the committee. Rep. Hart will receive new committee assignments during the legislature's organizational session in early December.

"When I spoke with Representative Hart about his request, he felt it was necessary to be removed from the Revenue and Taxation Committee while he pursued a legal appeal against the Idaho State Tax Commission," said Denney. "I know he'd like to resolve this matter and focus on serving his constituents in north Idaho."

Rep. Hart was re-elected for a fourth term on November 2 by 75 percent of voters, despite a late write-in challenge from a constituent.

"Representative Hart was duly elected by the people in his district to represent them in Boise," said Denney. "Phil's one of the hardest-working members of the House and, I believe, he'll continue to be responsive to his constituents while serving on another committee."

Last week Denney was asked to convene a second ethics committee to investigate allegations against Hart stemming from his tax challenges and a 1996 incident in which Hart removed timber from state lands to build his house. Denney will form the committee as soon as possible.

An ethics committee met during the summer and recommended that Hart be removed from the Revenue and Taxation Committee due to his tax challenges.

(Attachment – Rep. Phil Hart letter to House Speaker Lawrence Denney)

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House of Representatives State of Idaho

Hon. Lawrence Denney
Speaker of the Idaho House
State Capitol Building
Boise, Idaho 83720

October 29, 2010

Dear Speaker Denney:

Now that the election season is nearly behind us, I wanted to address concerns about my continued service on the House Revenue & Taxation Committee.

It is with real sadness that I request that you appoint me to a different committee assignment in the upcoming organizational session. I have enjoyed my work with members of that committee over the past four years, and I continue in my passionate belief that we must fight the over-reach of government through its power to tax. However, the developments of the past several months have created a rather toxic environment for me and members of the House. I fear that my continued service on this committee would only serve to provide fodder to members of the media and my political opponents.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the forthright manner in which you have dealt with me throughout the course of this public controversy. You have acted to protect the integrity of the House, while treating me with fairness. Idaho is blessed to have you serving her as Speaker.

Thank you again for your graciousness and consideration of my request.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Hart".

Phil Hart
State Representative
District 3