



*News release from the Idaho Democratic Party*

**•FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Ethics: The Elephant in the Room**

It is unfortunate that the “new normal” the Governor spoke of today, doesn’t include addressing the culture of corruption that is tolerated by our GOP leadership. The first item of business that the 2012 Idaho Legislature needs to address should be cleaning house. While we are pleased that Governor Otter has finally joined the Idaho Democratic Party in addressing Idahoans top priorities such as job creation, education and healthcare, the most important part of today’s State of the State address was what he didn’t say. He did not say anything about ethics. The Majority Party needs to get their house in order and then they can move on to to the important issues of job creation, the health care exchange, and budget discussions. Idaho Democratic legislators have been pushing for this since 2005.

“The culture of corruption and cronyism that has taken root in the GOP requires a leader who will put his foot down,” Larry Grant, State Chair of the Idaho Democratic Party said. “I call on Governor Otter to join our Idaho Democratic legislators in providing leadership on this issue. He must demand that the Republican controlled legislature enact ethics reform for the State of Idaho, including those affecting the Governor’s office.”

Grant pointed to at least three reasons why the legislature needs to focus on the restoration of responsible and ethical government before moving on to the people’s work:

- Representative Hart not only has refused to pay both federal and state back taxes but stole timber from public land to build his house. He is still a standing legislator and uses the office as an excuse for delaying his day in court.
- Tax Commission Chairman Royce Chigbrow went un-prosecuted even after he was found to have illegally used his office to influence cases before the Tax Commission on behalf of his cronies.
- Treasurer Ron Crane is now accused of using his state credit card to pay for personal gas, on top, of using the State’s funds to hire limousines to transport staff family members on annual trips to New York City.

Grant went on to say, “Make no mistake, our Idaho Democratic Legislators have been calling for ethics reform since 2005. What is tolerated in Idaho’s GOP is illegal in many other states. We must have representative and responsible government to restore trust and confidence with the public. Republican leaders talk a good game, but do nothing. Given all the headlines, this is the year that

our Democratic Legislators can force them to actually do something about the culture of corruption they have ignored for so long.” xxx