

APNewsBreak: Denney may run for sec of state

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By JOHN MILLER, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Republican state Rep. Lawrence Denney has filed official fundraising paperwork ahead of a potential bid to unseat Secretary of State Ben Ysursa in the GOP primary next May.

Denney, a former House speaker from Midvale, said Friday he has yet to make an official campaign announcement. But he declared a political treasurer on Thursday, allowing him to raise money for a run.

Politically, Denney and Ysursa have been antagonists.

In 2012, for instance, Ysursa blocked Denney's bid to fire Republican members of a panel redrawing political boundaries for Idaho's legislative and congressional districts, saying the then-House speaker was stepping outside his authority.

Denney was ousted last December as House speaker by GOP Rep. Scott Bedke and is now chairman of the House Resources & Conservation Committee.

In addition, Denney was among those who favored efforts to shutter Idaho's GOP primaries to all but registered Republican voters, while Ysursa went to court in an unsuccessful bid to keep primaries open to all voters, regardless of party. The primaries were closed last year.

Denney, considered one of the House's staunchest conservatives, declined on Friday to detail his motivations behind a possible challenge to Ysursa, a lawyer from Boise who is in his third term as secretary of state.

"I'm not prepared to talk about that yet," said Denney, a farmer from western Idaho serving his ninth term in the Legislature. "When we do announce, I'll let you know."

He says he'll make an official announcement after determining whether he can successfully raise campaign funds from supporters.

A phone call and email to Ysursa late Friday weren't immediately returned.

After his initial election in 2002, Ysursa ran unopposed in the Republican primaries in 2006 and 2010 and easily won his general election races.

Before his election, Ysursa was a longtime deputy to former Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa.

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