

Otter, not Winmill, lacks Idaho values

Chris Carlson/Carlson Chronicles (via Lewiston Tribune)

Idaho Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter has lost all touch with reality. His slandering of U.S. District Court Judge Lynn Winmill at a Capital for a Day in Craigmont by accusing this distinguished jurist of not being in touch with Idaho values goes beyond the pale. Sadly, it demonstrates the great degree to which the governor himself just doesn't get what is going on in this world.

Otter is the one who doesn't get Idaho values.

Idaho values education. Otter clearly does not. His eight years have seen educational support eviscerated by him and the Legislature. Idaho now ranks 50th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia in terms of per pupil spending on education. The Albertson Foundation is running ads pleading with him and the Legislature not to fail Idaho. They ignore a third of Idaho's third-graders can't read at grade level and only one out of 10 Idaho high school graduates actually obtains a college degree.

Idahoans soundly rejected the Luna/Otter reform initiatives. Otter's Pollyanna-ish response was the people rejected the process not his proposals.

Idaho values honesty. Otter clearly does not. His shuck and jive on Corrections Corp. of America's bilking the state of millions by falsifying pay stubs regarding its management of the Idaho Correctional Center outside Boise, and then settling for \$1 million before the results of any investigation are known is patently deceitful and dishonest.

He claims not to have raised taxes, but three-fourths of Idaho school districts have had to pass supplemental property tax levies to compensate for state decreases. That is a tax shift and a tax increase pure and simple. But go ahead and keep up the Big Lie that it isn't, governor.

Idaho values its wilderness and its public lands with access to all. Otter does not. He has opposed fellow Republican Mike Simpson's carefully crafted Boulder/White Clouds legislation on the simple grounds there's enough wilderness in Idaho.

He is supporting the stupidity of the state looking into taking over federal lands but, of course, there'll be no new taxes needed.

Idaho values its children. Otter does not. Early childhood education benefits are well known, but Otter does not support the state providing funding for preschool classes.

Idaho values offering a helping hand to those who need a hand up, not a hand out. More than 100,000 Idahoans living at or near the poverty line would benefit from a Medicaid expansion, which would pay all the costs now absorbed by the state and county indigent funds.

After three years, Idaho would have to pick up 10 percent of the cost. Otter and the Legislature are literally standing by while hundreds of their fellow citizens will die prematurely. But does he care? Idahoans value compassionate conservatism, but Otter, secure in the bubble of his millions, has no idea of the daily struggle most Idahoans face.

Idaho values hard work and an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. Yet Otter brags about having the lowest required minimum wage in the country. He has no idea what a living wage is that a family needs to survive on today.

Idaho values competition, but Idahoans understand what their governor does not get: Because of an inferior educational system and a low wage scale, Idahoans don't have a chance to even get on the field in future competitions.

Idaho values fairness and abhors discrimination. Yet despite support for adding the words of "sexual orientation and gender identity" to Idaho's Human Rights Act from his supposed mentor, former Gov. Phil Batt, Otter supports continuing to maintain the image the rest of the world holds - that we're a backwards state full of bigots.

His failure to speak out in support of "add the words" is simply deplorable.

Idaho values a fair and equitable tax policy. Otter does not. He continually supports property tax relief for the rich and large landowners and doesn't mind sticking it to the middle class and poor.

Idahoans value unity, as in being a state in the United States. Otter plays footsie with the Tea Party types who believe in nullification and secession. He forgets when he says the Pledge of Allegiance he says the words "... *one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*"

Butch Otter is the one out of touch, not Lynn Winmill. Otter ought to resign now and let Lt. Gov. Brad Little step up.

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