

## **IDP Chair: GOP Politicians Burn Public Dollars, and Public Trust**

**Larry Kenck, chairman  
Idaho Democratic Party**

*Boise, Idaho*—Our State Treasurer Ron Crane has sent millions of our treasure up in smoke. Now, he is saying nonpartisan, state auditors are politically motivated for criticizing his losses and asking why he dumped \$27 million in risky investment losses from a local government fund he managed and into a state fund he also managed.

Full disclosure: I too am politically motivated.

My political motivation is that I believe that we need to hold our politicians accountable. If we do that, I believe that Idahoans will see that 20 years of GOP control of Idaho has hurt families, businesses, and our economy. I believe too that Ron Crane is part of a larger problem of Idaho's GOP leadership mismanaging our public funds.

As for Crane, he basically had one client purchase mortgage-backed securities from another client for about \$27.4 million more than they were worth. One client got a huge gift. The other client, the State of Idaho, well, we got kicked in the teeth.

Now, the 2008 housing bubble that sank mortgage-backed securities fooled many competent money managers. Is Ron Crane is one of those? In his 16 long years in office, he's spent tax dollars on limousine rides while on New York City junkets. He put \$8,000 on the state gas card to run personal errands. He gives \$10,000 of state tax dollars (your money)—annually—to a nonprofit organization that he created.

Crane is part of a system that rewards GOP politicians and their friends. We glimpsed that system early in January when the state's top lobbyists held a free campaign seminar for Republican lawmakers. The lobbyists pledged to do "anything" to get them re-elected.

Then there's the other scandal that broke last week—also a complicated and opaque mess—that further illustrates this system that is set against public interests.

Gov. Otter's appointee to the Department of Administration, Teresa Luna, asked the Legislature to give over \$14 million to contractors who manage Internet for schools. They needed the money because Gov. Otter's best friend and previous Dept. of Admin head, Mike Gwartney, inappropriately helped a contractor get the \$60 million contract, according to Idaho's Supreme Court. Since the legality of the contract is suspect, the federal government is holding back \$14 million.

Now, Luna, who is Supt. of Public Schools Tom Luna's sister, wants you the taxpayer to pay the fed's share to Education Networks of America. You remember them, right? They're the out-of-state company that Tom Luna awarded a 15-year, multimillion-dollar WiFi contract to last year.

Is your head spinning too?

This is Idaho's government. It is not working for We the People. This government works for GOP politicians and their political friends.

Yes. I am politically motivated. And I encourage everyone else in Idaho to find the same motivation. Look at the record of mismanagement and misdeeds of our top elected officials. When you do, you will see that it is time for honest, competent public servants to take over. It's time to vote for Idaho Democrats.

*By Idaho Democratic Party Chairman Larry Kenck*