

Edit: Labrador a failure as power broker

Lee Rozen/Moscow-Pullman Daily News Editorial Board

On Friday, Raul Labrador, the Republican (there is no other kind) congressman for the west half of Idaho, not only announced he was a candidate for House Majority Leader in Washington, D.C., but arrived in Moscow to chair Saturday's main session of the Idaho Republican convention.

He was a man on top of his world, a political heavyweight - or at least a good deal more jowly than when first elected. A mover and shaker, such as his convention companion, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who is a likely 2016 presidential candidate.

Now, his candidacy in the House was considered conservative symbolism - and little else - in reports out of Washington.

But here in Idaho, no doubt, he could be expected to be taken more seriously.

His stature would get the warring wings of the Idaho Republican party to put down their guns - or at least unload them briefly - so the Gem State GOP could move forward with a united set of goals and a duly elected set of leaders for the next couple of years.

It turns out it wasn't his stature at work, but his ego.

The two wings of the state party apparently have no more respect for him than they do for each other.

One calls the other the "Establishment," corrupted by power. This group, on the other hand, has been known to refer to the other side as the "tin foil hat" brigade.

On one side are the folks who hold most statewide elected offices from governor to controller, whatever that is, and the leadership jobs in the Legislature. On the other are the folks who want the Bible taught in public schools - as literature, of course - and to ban gay couples from having children.

At the end of the three days of meetings in Moscow under Labrador's deft political guidance, the Republicans slunk out of town without even deciding who among themselves had any right to attend, without having voted "yea" or "nay" on several wacky ideas for the party platform and without having voted in a party chair for the next two years. That was pretty much all they had to do, and they didn't do it.

"Boss" Labrador he ain't.

But so what? The "Establishment" wing will continue to run things to the liking of business, while the "tin foil hat" wing tries to repeal Common Core.

And the Democrats will be here next weekend.