

Idaho Republican Party

Press Release

September 12, 2014

For Immediate Release

Contact: Dave Johnston 208-343-6405

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Are A.J. Balukoff and the Idaho Democrat Party violating campaign finance law with their payroll practices?

Campaign Finance Disclosure Reports reveal that Democrat Candidate Balukoff and the Idaho Democrat Party may be violating campaign finance law.

Democrat Candidate for Governor A.J. Balukoff lists the staff running his campaign on his website "Meet A.J.'s Team."

However, campaign finance disclosure reports filed with the Idaho Secretary of State reveal that Balukoff isn't paying his staff. Instead reports show each of Balukoff's staff are line-itemed and paid for by the Idaho Democrat Party. Balukoff's reports reveal he is making contributions to the Idaho Democrat Party which may be repayments for money loaned by the Party but Balukoff's reports do not indicate any outstanding debts.

"This abnormal shuffling of funds where you have the Democrat Party paying for his staff and then the candidate making contributions back to the party raises several red flags," said Jason S. Risch, a campaign finance attorney "I have never seen this done before, but it's clearly not within the intent of the campaign disclosure law which is designed to promote transparency."

State Law prohibits a political party from contributing more than \$10,000 in an election cycle to a candidate-including in-kind contributions such as paying for a candidate's staff. The law also requires a campaign to report unpaid debt if it plans to pay that debt back.

Idaho GOP Executive Director David Johnston stated "While Balukoff has given over \$160,000 to the Democrat Party; a party cannot give more than \$10,000 in contributions to candidates. If they are paying for his staff, then they are violating the law by exceeding the legal contribution limits. If they are advancing the campaign the money by paying for the staff then that should be reported as a loan."

The purpose of campaign finance disclosure law is to bring greater transparency in campaign finances so Idahoans may see what candidates and political organizations are doing. Engaging in confusing

money shuffling schemes that appears to violate campaign finance law also violates the spirit of the law- which is to provide greater transparency.

Balukoff, being a certified public accountant, should know better. However, he is the same candidate who presided over a school board election in Boise that was riddled with shady practices. Finding shady schemes in his finances reports is not a surprise.

Idahoans deserve answers and clarity as to what is going on. The Idaho Democrat Party and Democrat Candidate Balukoff have some explaining to do.

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