

VOTER GUIDE

2014 Idaho election

U.S. Senate/Congress

North Idaho voters will see two congressional races on their general elections ballots, one of the state's two U.S. Senate seats and the U.S. House seat representing the state's 1st Congressional District. Congressional members are paid \$174,000 per year. Senate terms are six years; House terms are two years.

SENATE: Republican incumbent U.S. Sen. Jim Risch, an attorney, rancher, former longtime state senator and briefly Idaho's governor, is seeking a second term. He's largely ignored his Democratic challenger, Boise attorney Nels Mitchell, agreeing to only one debate on a Boise TV station.

- **Jim Risch** (R), 71, Boise; attorney, incumbent U.S. senator. One of Idaho's longest-serving state senators, he also served as lieutenant governor, and briefly as Idaho's governor when then-Gov. Dirk Kempthorne was named U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Risch serves on the Intelligence, Foreign Relations, and Energy and Natural Resources Committees in the Senate. Ranked most conservative senator by the National Journal; he's also among the Senate's wealthiest members.

- **Nels Mitchell** (D), 60, Boise; attorney, first-time candidate. Former regional trial counsel for Securities and Exchange Commission; University of Idaho law graduate (as is Risch) and former Boise High School student body president. Pledges to serve just one six-year term if elected; says Risch has lost touch with Idaho. Promises to work with Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson on wilderness legislation, which Risch has opposed.

CONGRESS, 1ST DISTRICT: Republican U.S. Rep. Raul Labrador is seeking a third term in the House. He faces a challenge from longtime state Rep. Shirley Ringo, D-Moscow. Labrador is a tea party favorite who was unopposed in the GOP primary this year; Ringo has long been one of the most liberal members of the Idaho House. She is retiring from the Legislature this year as she takes on Labrador; he's vastly outraised her, and the campaign has been low-key.

- **Raul Labrador** (R), 46, Eagle; immigration attorney, incumbent congressman. Labrador has been a frequent guest on national political shows and made an unsuccessful run for House majority leader this year; he's openly bucked his party leadership. A native of Puerto Rico, Labrador is fluent in Spanish and one of just 10 Hispanic Republicans in the House. Prior to winning his congressional seat, Labrador served two terms in the Idaho House. He's made immigration reform a top issue, but opposed the Senate's package.

- **Shirley Ringo** (D), 74, Moscow; retired math teacher, state representative. After a 38-year career in teaching, including 25 years teaching math at Moscow High School,

Ringo served seven terms in the Idaho House, where she pushed for more school funding and was an outspoken minority member of the budget-writing Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee. A former Latah County Democratic Party chair, she was a vocal opponent of the voter-rejected “Students Come First” school reform laws; pushed for reforms to the state Tax Commission; and sponsored legislation to allow domestic violence victims to vote without disclosing their home addresses.

STATEWIDE OFFICES

GOVERNOR: Two-term GOP Gov. Butch Otter is seeking a third consecutive term, which only one Idaho governor has ever won (Robert Smylie in 1962; Cecil Andrus served four terms, but they weren’t consecutive). Otter faces a challenge from Democrat A.J. Balukoff, who is hitting hard on Otter’s record on school funding, the economy and more. Also, Libertarian candidate John Bujak is challenging Otter from the right, contending the longtime libertarian Idaho politician has become too liberal. Four-year term. Position pays \$119,000 a year.

- **Butch Otter** (R), 72, Star; incumbent governor, multimillionaire rancher, retired from J.R. Simplot Corp. Otter was first elected to the Idaho Legislature in 1972. He served 14 years as the state’s lieutenant governor, and three terms in Congress before being elected governor in 2006. He won his second term in 2010 with 59 percent of the vote. A rodeo enthusiast, Otter this year was named to the Idaho Rodeo Hall of Fame.

- **A.J. Balukoff** (D), 68, Boise; businessman, retired CPA, and longtime chairman of the Boise School Board. Former owner of a large CPA firm and a chain of athletic clubs, Balukoff is part of the ownership groups of Boise’s Grove Hotel, the Idaho Steelheads hockey team, Century Link Arena, downtown office buildings and more. He was first elected to the Boise School Board in 1997; it oversees one of the highest performing school districts in the state. Active in civic and charitable efforts, Balukoff is the former bishop of his LDS church ward.

- **John Bujak** (L), 45, Eagle; attorney, former Canyon County prosecutor. Bujak was a Republican when, as Canyon County’s elected prosecutor, he faced charges including misuse of public funds for a contract he signed to have the county handle prosecutions for the city of Nampa; he was acquitted on all charges, and now maintains the GOP establishment was out to get him. A Navy veteran, he’s a former deputy attorney general and currently an attorney in private practice.

Also on the ballot: Steve Pankey, 63, Constitution Party; Jill Humble, 65, Independent; Pro-Life, 73, Independent.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR: As GOP Lt. Gov. Brad Little seeks a second full term in the part-time office, he’s being challenged by Democrat Bert Marley. Constitution Party candidate David Hartigan also is on the ballot. Idaho’s lieutenant governor presides over the state Senate and fills in as acting governor; other duties are assigned by the

governor, which in recent years have included economic development work and vetting candidates for state appointments. Four-year term. Position pays \$35,700 a year.

- **Brad Little** (R), 60, Emmett; rancher and former chairman of the Idaho Wool Growers Association. Little is a third-generation Idahoan and scion of a well-known ranching family. A University of Idaho graduate, he served four terms in the state Senate before being appointed lieutenant governor by Gov. Butch Otter in 2009; he won a full term in 2010, and is now seeking another.

- **Bert Marley** (D), 66, McCammon. Along with a 23-year career as a high school teacher, Marley served two terms in the state House and three in the Senate. He ran unsuccessfully for state superintendent of schools in 2006, losing to Jana Jones in the Democratic primary. An Idaho State University graduate with a master's degree from Utah State, Marley served as director of public policy for the Idaho Education Association before retiring.

SECRETARY OF STATE: This contest is for an open seat due to the retirement of longtime GOP Secretary of State Ben Ysursa. Vying to take over are Republican Lawrence Denney, former speaker of the Idaho House, and state Rep. Holli Woodings, D-Boise. Four-year term. Position pays \$101,150 a year.

- **Lawrence Denney** (R), 66, Midvale; farmer and nine-term state representative. Denney served four years as majority leader and three terms as House speaker, before becoming the first Idaho House speaker ousted by his own caucus in 2013. As speaker, he sponsored Idaho's Voter ID law, unilaterally killed bills, removed committee chairs who didn't toe the line, and quashed long-sought financial disclosure legislation for lawmakers. After his removal as speaker, he chaired the House Resources Committee. A Vietnam veteran, Denney is a University of Idaho graduate.

- **Holli Woodings** (D), 35, Boise; renewable energy consultant, first-term state representative. Woodings co-owns a high-tech firm with her husband, Ryan; she got her start in politics through volunteering to run a successful campaign for a school levy. She is a fair-elections advocate who has pushed for making voting easier, including unsuccessful legislation to allow voter registration when Idahoans register for a driver's license. Woodings is a Boise State University graduate.

STATE TREASURER: Idaho's state treasurer, the state's chief fiscal officer, is responsible for investing, receiving and disbursing state funds. GOP Treasurer Ron Crane is seeking a fifth term; while unopposed four years ago, he's facing a lively challenge this time from Democrat Deborah Silver, a CPA, who's pointed to critical state audits of the office in recent years. Four-year term. Position pays \$101,150 a year.

- **Ron Crane** (R), 65, Nampa; incumbent state treasurer for the past 16 years and alarm company founder. Prior to being elected state treasurer in 1998, he served 16 years as a state representative from Canyon County, chairing the House State Affairs

Committee. Crane holds an associate's degree in religious education from Bible Missionary Institute in Rock Island, Illinois.

- **Deborah Silver** (D), 57, Twin Falls; certified public accountant. Silver has operated an accounting business in Twin Falls with her husband for the past 28 years. She also taught accounting at the College of Southern Idaho for five years. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Boise State University. She has served as Twin Falls County Democratic Party chair since 2007.

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: As two-term GOP Superintendent Tom Luna retires, there's a hot race to succeed him between Democrat Jana Jones, the former chief deputy superintendent who narrowly lost to Luna in 2006, and Republican Sherri Ybarra, a political newcomer who won a four-way GOP primary in May with 28.7 percent of the vote. Four-year term. Position pays \$101,150 a year.

- **Jana Jones** (D), 61, Idaho Falls; vice president for K-12 education practice at Maximus, a national consulting firm. She has a doctorate in education, taught school in Idaho Falls for 10 years, and operated a private school that was the state's first to fully integrate children with disabilities, before she joined the state Department of Education, serving under three superintendents and rising to chief deputy under Superintendent Marilyn Howard. She also headed Gov. Cecil Andrus' Office for Children.

- **Sherri Ybarra** (R), 43, Mountain Home; curriculum director and federal programs director for the Mountain Home School District. She has a master's and is working toward a doctorate in education. Ybarra taught school in Mountain Home for 11 years before becoming a vice principal and then a principal; she's in her second year in her current administrative position with the district. Has struggled with a series of gaffes during the campaign, from a campaign website that copied Jones' to mistakenly identifying a former primary rival as a backer; she says she's "not a polished politician."

IDAHO LEGISLATURE – Kootenai County districts

State lawmakers are paid \$16,438 per year. All terms are two years.

2nd Legislative District

This district takes in northern and eastern Kootenai County, including Hayden and Dalton Gardens. It has just one contested race in November.

HOUSE SEAT A: Conservative Rep. Vito Barbieri, R-Dalton Gardens, is seeking a third term in this heavily Republican district; he faces Democratic challenger Cheryl Stransky, in a rematch; he defeated her with almost two-thirds of the vote in 2012.

- **Vito Barbieri** (R), 62, Dalton Gardens; retired attorney, incumbent. Barbieri owns a catering business and the "Vap-It" electronic cigarette store in Post Falls. In his two terms in the House, he's been an outspoken tea party supporter and opponent of Medicaid expansion and civil rights protections for gays. Barbieri is board chairman of

the Open Arms crisis pregnancy center and clinic in Coeur d'Alene. A home-schooling advocate, he's called on Christians to pull their children out of Idaho's "Godless" public schools.

- **Cheryl Stransky** (D), 62, Dalton Gardens; retired longtime school counselor. Supports reprioritizing government spending to increase school funding, raising the minimum wage, and expanding Medicaid. Supporter of public schools. Backs construction of a state mental health crisis center in Coeur d'Alene, which Barbieri opposed. Former president of the North Idaho Counseling Association. Challenged Barbieri unsuccessfully in 2012, receiving 34.3 percent of the vote.

3rd Legislative District

This district takes in western and southern Kootenai County, including Post Falls and Rathdrum. It has just one contested race in November.

HOUSE SEAT A: First-term GOP Rep. Ron Mendive is being challenged by Democrat Michelle Lippert of Post Falls.

- **Ron Mendive** (R), 64, Coeur d'Alene; self-employed in construction and land services, semi-retired. After winning the GOP primary two years ago by nine votes, Mendive, an outspoken opponent of abortion, won office with nearly two-thirds of the vote. A backer of the Rally Right and United Conservatives of North Idaho, Mendive, on his campaign website, calls GOP Gov. Butch Otter "the Obamacare pusher."

- **Michelle Lippert** (D), 60, Post Falls; philosophy instructor at North Idaho College. Lippert is the former chair of the faculty assembly and has been an elected school board member in Post Falls for the past 17 years. She became a candidate after a conversation with Mendive about a guns-on-campus bill that he supported, but that the state's public colleges opposed; it passed.

4th Legislative District

This district consists of the city of Coeur d'Alene. It has two contested races.

SENATE: After longtime Sen. John Goedde, R-Coeur d'Alene, the chairman of the Senate Education Committee, was defeated in the primary, GOP primary winner Mary Souza faces Constitution Party candidate Ray Writz in November; no Democrat is running.

- **Mary Souza** (R), 61, Coeur d'Alene; former critical care nurse and nursing instructor, former unsuccessful candidate for Coeur d'Alene mayor and City Council, author of a weekly email newsletter on local issues. Served on city Planning & Zoning Commission. Promises to support "conservative principles"; says she's not aligned with any of the factions within the Kootenai County GOP, but knows and likes people in all of them.

- **Ray Writz** (Constitution Party), 63, Coeur d'Alene; businessman, longtime owner of janitorial business. Wants to "restore a constitutional republic in the state of Idaho." Ran for state House in 2012 on Constitution Party ticket; took just under 4 percent of the vote.

HOUSE SEAT B:Third-term Rep. Kathy Sims, R-Coeur d'Alene, faces a challenge from Democrat Anne Nesse, whom she defeated in 2012, 57 percent to 43 percent.

- **Kathy Sims** (R), 72, Coeur d'Alene; owner of the Coeur d'Alene Honda dealership and a former county Republican Party chair, seeking a third term in the House. She earlier served a term in the Senate after being appointed, but lost to Sen. John Goedde, R-Coeur d'Alene, when redistricting pushed the two Republicans into the same district as she sought re-election. A critic of urban renewal laws and of the local redevelopment agency, she is vice chair of the House Local Government Committee.

- **Anne Nesse** (D), 66, Coeur d'Alene; former teacher and nurse and small-business operator, ran unsuccessfully against Sims two years ago, and since then has become an advocate for raising Idaho's minimum wage, pushing for a voter initiative and forming the group Raiseldaho.org. She's continuing that push, looking at possible city initiatives. Though the measure didn't receive enough signatures to make this year's ballot, Nesse said her group learned that there's widespread support in Idaho for the idea.

KOOTENAI COUNTY RACES

Commissioner

District 1 (Post Falls and the northwest corner of the county) : Republican Marc Eberlein defeated incumbent Todd Tondee in the GOP primary. Eberlein says voters have had enough of over-regulation, expensive consultants and "streamline power grabs" by county commissioners. He said he'll demand more accountability, transparency and fiscal restraint and work to reduce turnover in the sheriff's office. Democrat Bruce Noble favors a switch to five part-time commissioners and nonpartisan county seats. Both candidates support cleaning up the county's land use code while protecting private property rights, and oppose a privately owned, leased jail with beds for inmates from outside the area. Four-year term. Position pays \$72,858 a year.

- **Marc Eberlein** (R), 55, Post Falls. Manages Eberlein Fine Cabinetry; business owner for 28 years, including custom gun maker; investor in Bakken oil interests in Montana and North Dakota; ran unsuccessfully for commissioner in 2012.

- **Bruce Noble** (D), 61, Post Falls. Founder of HydroGen Energy; civil engineer and land surveyor since 1992; served on Idaho Commission for Libraries for 17 years; Kootenai Bridge Academy board chairman for three years; describes himself as politically moderate, calls his opponent "an anti-government ideologue."

District 2 (Coeur d'Alene south of Dalton Avenue and the southern and eastern portions of the county): Open seat vacated by Commissioner Jai Nelson. Democrat Jerry Shriner highlights his work in corrections and with government agencies and nonprofits. He says the county must ease jail crowding by enhancing drug and mental health courts, probation services and work release programs. Commissioners need to consider a broader array of views to improve the land use code, Shriner said. Republican David Stewart touts his experience running large crews in business, construction and development. He's a strong proponent of private property rights and low taxes, and believes county government has "become a policing force against the people." Stewart was motivated to run by his opposition to the controversial Unified Land Use Code proposal. Two-year-term. Position pays \$72,858 a year.

- **Jerry Shriner** (D), 71, Rockford Bay. Worked in probation and parole, residential treatment in Alaska; operated construction company in Kootenai County; started Harmony House Assisted Living homes in Hayden; active with local Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Committee, Panhandle Back Country Horsemen.

- **David Stewart** (R), 51, Cougar Bay. Owns ProFormance Lube Center in Spokane; was partner in Stewart Construction and Arrow Point Development companies; staunch conservative who believes global warming is a hoax and "more guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens means less crime."

Assessor: With 60 employees, the office sets property values, maps property boundaries, processes homeowner exemptions and manages vehicle license and title services. Republican Mike McDowell is seeking a fourth term. He wants to continue to improve customer service, including more online business, and make appraisal information more available and interactive. His focus is on being efficient and effective with the budget, and motivating the office staff. Challenger Shirley McFaddan, who prevailed in the primary as a write-in Democrat, said her goal is to keep the office running smoothly with the current staff and not micromanage. She says lines are still too long in vehicle services and she would address that. Four-year term. Position pays \$70,684 a year.

- **Mike McDowell** (R), 59, Coeur d'Alene. First elected in 2002; was chief deputy assessor for two decades before that; Coeur d'Alene City Council, 1991-96.

- **Shirley McFaddan** (D), 60, Athol. Retired from Verizon, General Telephone; former schoolteacher; worked on family farm in southern Idaho; serves on Idaho Workforce Development Council; ran unsuccessfully for state Senate in 2012.

Clerk: With 85 employees, the office oversees county elections, recorder and auditor, and is clerk of the district court and Board of Commissioners. Republican Jim Brannon was appointed to the position last December after the death of Clerk Cliff Hayes. Brannon said the elections division continues to improve in reporting election results, but added he won't sacrifice accuracy for expediency. He said the clerk's office has led efforts to better track and fulfill public records requests and to streamline the \$79 million

county budget process. Democrat Larry Belmont said it's time to look at qualifications, and not political muscle, for local elected offices. He said he'd bring a proven style of management to the office, which he believes should be nonpartisan. He's not raising or spending campaign money and says he'd serve only one term. Four-year term. Position pays \$70,684 a year.

- **Jim Brannon:** (R), 61, Coeur d'Alene. Worked in financial services as an investment broker, insurance agent and trust officer; previously worked as producer and director in television and radio; executive director of North Idaho Habitat for Humanity, 2006-09.

- **Larry Belmont** (D), 78, Coeur d'Alene. Directed Panhandle Health District for 27 years, retiring in 1998; former public health adviser, U.S. Public Health Service; Army and National Guard, 1953-58, with one tour in Korea; ran unsuccessfully for state House in 1998.

Treasurer: With seven employees, the treasurer is the county tax collector and chief investment officer of county funds. Republican Steven Matheson said as the county's investment portfolio has grown larger and more complex, the treasurer's office has not kept current with sound investment practices. For one, he is critical of the decision to invest in short-term instruments for the fund that will be used decades from now to close a county landfill. Matheson said he'd increase the duration of investment instruments to realize better returns and do more to ensure the soundness of county funds. Democrat Janet Callen bristles at Matheson's approach. She said she's a fiscal conservative and would manage the office in an open and transparent way, investing wisely and not risking county funds. Four-year term. Position pays \$70,684 a year.

- **Janet Callen** (D), "past retirement age," Coeur d'Alene. Retired certified public accountant and H&R Block franchise owner; former IRS agent; ran unsuccessfully for state House in 2012.

- **Steven Matheson** (R), 50, Coeur d'Alene. A municipal adviser and managing principal with Steven Douglas LLC; 28 years in financial management, including with JPMorgan Global Derivatives Products Group, Bank One Risk Management, Seattle First National Bank; volunteers with sheriff's search and rescue.

Proposed constitutional amendment

HJR 2: This would add a clause to the Idaho Constitution protecting the Legislature's ability to review and reject administrative rules from executive branch agencies, and making it clear that the governor could not veto such moves. Idaho's Legislature already has that power, based on law and court decisions, but this would enshrine it in the constitution. Idaho has a more extensive process for legislative review of agency rules than any other state. HJR 2 passed the Legislature unanimously; it needs a majority vote of the people to take effect.