

## **Republicans Must Stand Together in November**

Much is at stake in the coming elections. Idahoans will soon cast their votes to choose those who will lead our great state. We need to select men and women who will help Idaho reach its potential. Leaders who will help the Gem State shine.

Earlier this year the Republican Party had a vigorous and spirited debate over who those leaders should be. We disagreed over ideas, we debated, and then we selected nominees to represent the Republican Party in November.

It's no secret I supported my good friend, Sen. Russ Fulcher, in the gubernatorial primary. My party disagreed and chose Gov. Butch Otter as our nominee. Some Republicans and conservatives are upset with that decision. I am not. The time for internal disagreement is over. Butch Otter is my governor, my nominee, and I'm supporting him 100 percent.

The role of the chief executive of the state is often under-appreciated. The governor doesn't merely sign legislation; he's instrumental in establishing the state's vision. He appoints hundreds of people to lead state agencies, boards and commissions. Most vital, the governor names our district and appellate court judges. His influence touches every corner of our state -- and many aspects of our lives -- whether we realize it or not.

While Gov. Otter and I haven't always agreed, we are united on this: Idaho cannot afford a Democratic governor whose liberal friends and liberal appointments would put our state on a course of failure. We cannot abandon our conservative values. Idaho must not stray from the common sense that puts private enterprise and freedom above government-driven solutions.

So who exactly is A.J. Balukoff? When I ran for Congress in 2010, A.J. Balukoff supported my Democratic opponent as a "Republican for Minnick." More recently he bragged about being an independent who voted for Mitt Romney. Now he claims the mantle as standard-bearer of the Democratic Party. To be honest, I don't think anyone knows.

It is time for all Republicans to come together, put our differences aside, and elect the Republican ticket. In 2012, too many Republicans and conservatives stayed home and refused to support the Republican Presidential nominee, Mitt Romney. The result has been a disaster for our country. We cannot afford to make the same mistake here in Idaho.

Important issues face Idaho. Now is the time for Republicans to come home, united by our goals of limited government, low taxes, less regulation and more personal freedom. Idaho is a great place to live, work and raise a family -- a true gem -- because of the common sense conservative philosophy that has guided this state through good times and hard times. Let's keep it that way.

-Rep. Raúl Labrador