

# IDP Chair Responds to Governor's State of State Address

**By Larry Kenck**

Eight years have taught Idahoans that we need to pay more attention to what Governor Otter does than what he says he does. Yes, Governor Otter, Idaho learns. But we have yet to see whether you and your Administration does.

What has Governor Otter brought to Idaho? For one, Otter and 20 years of failed GOP policies gave us the highest percentage of minimum wage jobs in the nation. Idaho is at the lowest level of education investment in America.

Idahoans have made it clear that we do not believe workers, families, businesses and children should be in last place. We want the best opportunities to keep our children in Idaho. That means focusing on high-paying jobs and investing in quality education—not luring businesses on the promise of low wages as Gov. Otter has done in recent years.

Under Governor Otter and the Supermajority-GOP Legislature, Idaho families, businesses and workers have lost millions to flawed state contracts. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is still investigating Idaho's former private prison contractor, Corrections Corporation of America (a major Otter campaign donor). We have yet to hear what the FBI has learned about this scandal. The Legislature is also sorting out the illegal contract for wireless connections to schools—a contract that has a crony of Gov. Otter's connected to it at every juncture.

So, Gov. Otter is urging the Legislature to move forward “unfettered by cynicism or mistrust.” Yet, it has been Gov. Otter who has earned the public's mistrust. Now it is the governor's responsibility to earn that trust back—with actions, not just words.

Idaho is a small state. We are friends, neighbors, and colleagues. We tend to like each other even when we disagree on politics. We trust each other—until we have good reason not to. Gov. Otter has given Idaho plenty of good reasons not to trust him.

An important way for Gov. Otter to earn back some trust is for him to join Idaho Democrats to put money in the pockets of workers (not just the governor's well-connected friends), to invest fully in education, and to let Idaho's businesses prosper. We must work together to build our communities and give Idahoans the opportunity to thrive in the state that we all love.

***By Idaho Democratic Party Chairman Larry Kenck***