

In a week dominated by balls, Democrats drop one

Dan Hammes/St. Maries Gazette-Record

Between inflating and grabbing there has been a lot of chatter of late about balls.

Then Idaho Democrats go and drop one.

The news this week is dominated by the NFL and the issue with the deflated balls. To say this story has received tremendous news coverage would be an understatement. Virtually every news outlet anywhere - print, web, broadcast, can and string - has covered and continues to cover the story about the Patriots and their balls. Then Marshawn Lynch, the Seattle running back, got fined \$20,000 for grabbing his and the coverage blows up once again.

And that's a good thing. Not that the Seahawk running back does such boorish things or that the Patriots are cheating once again. But the coverage shows we have our priorities straight.

Ballgate is refreshing because it gets politics out of the news.

We can all agree politics are boring, mundane and something with which sensible people are absolutely fed up. So while we concede that writing about grown men fiddling with balls - or grabbing them - is more entertaining, the story about Idaho Democrats dropping the ball simply cannot be ignored.

For whatever reason, President Obama decided he had to visit Boise last week. His visit caused quite a fuss. Political types jockeyed to meet, greet or at the very least, be seen with the president. And that makes some sense. He is, after all, the most powerful man in the world. With all that power, he can fix, change, adjust or calibrate a multitude of things simply by saying it should be done.

Since he is a Democrat, Democrats were given the most opportunity for face time with Obama. And precious time this is. One doesn't have to be a Secret Service agent to understand there is far more demand for time with the president than he has time.

So imagine you are a high falutin' Idaho Democrat. Imagine you are so respected by your party that you are the person given the opportunity to alert Obama to an issue that is critical to the residents of the state of Idaho. And we must remember, this is a once-in-a-lifetime moment. There is no second opportunity.

What do you tell him?

Dave Bieter, mayor of Boise, figured the most critical thing the president should know about Idaho is that the Boulder-White Clouds area must - must - be protected by being designated a national monument.

We may be going out on a limb here, but of all the issues - controversy, disputes, disagreements - between the federal government and the state of Idaho, our guess is the vast majority of Idaho residents would not place Boulder-White Clouds anywhere near the top of the list.

Or even on the list.

Our guess is most Idahoans are more concerned with jobs, taxes, mortgages. You know, those little things in life. But working Idahoans, apparently, are not as enlightened as Democrat Party bigwigs.

Now we're certain Boulder-White Clouds is a wonderful place. And perhaps, even though nobody is threatening to despoil the area anytime soon, it should be "protected." But other federal-state issues are far more important to working Idahoans.

Management of national forests comes to mind.

But instead of bothering with a topic that impact blue-collar workers - you remember, all those working people who were once the base of the party - Democratic leaders chat up the president about Boulder-White Clouds.

And Democrats wonder why they cannot win elections in Idaho.

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