

Sen. Nuxoll's intolerance not representative of Idaho

Devin Rokyta/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

The majority of Idaho's state senators politely and respectfully welcomed Hindu statesman Rajan Zed last week when he delivered to the chamber a prayer focusing on acting "selflessly, without any thought of personal profit."

Senators - Democrats and Republicans alike - shook Zed's hand following the prayer and thanked him for coming to Boise.

Of course there had to be a few bad apples. A small handful of senators - Republicans Sheryl Nuxoll of Cottonwood, Lori Den Hartog of Meridian and Steve Vick of Dalton Gardens - used the opportunity to embarrass themselves and our state by refusing to attend the prayer and then proceeding to insult the Hindu faith.

"Hindu is a false faith with false gods," Nuxoll told the media after the floor session that followed the prayer. "It's great that Hindu people can practice their religion, but since we're the Senate we're setting an example of what we, Idaho, believe."

A majority of Idahoans may be Christians, but we believe we can safely say most of the state's residents would disagree with the example set by Nuxoll. Most Idahoans aren't intolerant bigots. Most believe in respecting other religions and viewpoints, and would have no issue at all with bowing their heads in respect as Zed delivered his message, one that many in Boise should heed.

Zed sent out an email requesting that Nuxoll apologize for her offensive behavior and remarks. She declined the opportunity to atone and instead doubled down.

"He can say a prayer anywhere he wants in the Capitol, but I'm in a floor session and bound to follow the Constitution, (which is) based on Judeo-Christian principles," she responded.

Nuxoll apparently needs a civics lesson. She forgets this country was founded on freedom of religion, which includes non-Christian beliefs.