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Tribe Calls for Legislative Override of Governor's Veto on Instant Racing

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PLUMMER, IDAHO – Today, Idaho Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter announced his decision to go against lawmakers and vetoed Senate Bill 1011, the bill to repeal instant racing. SB 1011 was introduced by the Coeur d’Alene Tribe at the beginning of the 2015 session.

“Idahoans asked our Governor to defend the Idaho Constitution by repealing instant racing, and sadly the Governor made a clear choice to look the other way,” said Chairman Chief Allan of the Coeur d’Alene Tribe. “He turned his back on the Legislature and Idahoans in order to protect his friends and financiers.”

In the last election cycle, campaign finance records show Governor Otter received nearly \$56,000 from Treasure Valley Racing, its six owners, Intermountain Racing and Winning for Idaho, the PAC for Greyhound Park and Event Center. Treasure Valley Racing has installed 200 instant racing terminals at Les Bois Park in Boise, Intermountain Racing has 80 machines at the Double Down Bar and Grill in Idaho Falls and there are 35 machines at the Greyhound Park in Post Falls.

“The Governor has chosen to allow his buddies to continue their illegal instant racing casinos around the state while ignoring the Idaho Constitution, which he has vowed time and time again to vigorously defend and uphold,” said Chief Allan. “To say we’re incredibly disappointed doesn’t even begin to describe it.”

The Governor’s actions hint at a clear double standard. In May of 2014, Governor Otter filed a lawsuit against the Coeur d’Alene Tribe accusing the Tribe of violating the Idaho Constitution and its gaming compact with the state by offering poker. The case is still pending before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. Interestingly now, even after an overwhelming majority of lawmakers voted to repeal instant racing because of its constitutionality, Governor Otter seems fine turning a blind eye to Idaho’s Constitution because it benefits his close friends.

“We are thankful for all the support we’ve received from Idaho’s lawmakers this session as we’ve worked to repeal instant racing,” said Chief Allan. “We are hopeful the Legislature will continue to fight for what is right and override Governor Otter’s veto on this bill.”

To override the Governor’s veto on SB 1011 it will take a two-thirds majority vote of those present in both the House and Senate. The bill originally passed both chambers of the Legislature with more than two-thirds standing in support of the repeal, with the House approving the bill 49-21 and the Senate approving it by a vote of 25-9.

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