

# Otter likely wants \$1M to support animal abusers

Devin Rokyta/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter recently announced he plans to ask state lawmakers in January to dump another \$1 million into the state's shrinking Constitutional Defense fund.

He says it's needed to continue "defending the sovereignty of our state and our citizens." Most recently that's meant fighting to ensure the state's gay residents aren't afforded the same basic rights as their heterosexual neighbors, and that women don't have control over their bodies.

The fund was created back in 1995 to help the state deal with sovereignty conflicts with the federal government. Money from the fund can be spent to file lawsuits or defend Idaho from lawsuits.

Despite having paid out more than \$2.1 million, the fund hasn't funded a winning case since 1996.

So what has it bought Idaho residents?

According to The Associated Press, it has paid for three losing attempts at defending the state's unconstitutional abortion laws, two lawsuits over laws that made it more difficult for Idaho citizens to get initiatives on the ballot and two failed lawsuits involving gay rights - including one in which it forked out \$70,000 in an effort to prevent a Navy veteran from being buried with her wife.

Way to support the veterans, huh?

The single largest payment was \$628,000 to attorneys who challenged the state's ban on gay marriage, according to the AP.

As the losses have piled up, the fund has dwindled. It currently has just a bit more than \$300,000, or, assuming the going rates hold, just enough for four more attempts at preventing gay servicemembers from being buried next to their partners.

Fear not, Butch wants another million.

Butch will likely want to use the money to defend the state's law banning undercover investigations of farming operations, also known as the ag-gag bill, which was struck down by a judge earlier this year.

So rather than defending bigots and their unconstitutional laws, this time the fund will go toward supporting animal abusers - and another losing battle.