

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearn announces run for Coeur d'Alene Representative 4B in November election

He pledges to be the change we deserve, the voice we need

Tom Hearn, 66, of Coeur d'Alene, officially announced his campaign for the state legislature today. Here is his full statement:

Good morning everyone, and thank you for coming. I am here today to proudly announce my run for the legislature from Coeur d'Alene as a Representative in position 4B.

OUR SHARED IDAHO VALUES

My family has lived in Coeur d'Alene for 35 years. My wife is a retired Post Falls school teacher and I was a small business owner in Coeur d'Alene. I owned a mental health clinic for 26 years. We raised our children in this community and now our grandchildren live here and attend Coeur d'Alene public schools. We appreciate the quality of life we have been blessed with here. My candidacy is all about ensuring that quality remains for future generations.

Idahoans value responsibility, freedom, hard work, fairness, our families, our churches, our communities and our independence. Those values are my values. We deserve to have a local and state government that supports these values and works for all of us, a government that is as lean, effective, efficient and hard working as Idaho workers.

REAL SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION – NOT LIP SERVICE

Strong support for public education is very important to me. When I am elected I will spend my time in the legislature fighting for Idaho's children and families. I have done this both on the Coeur d'Alene School Board and as Region 1 Chair of the Idaho School Boards Association. During my time on the Coeur d'Alene School Board I have worked with other board members to create a board that is more open and transparent and to improve the quality of education for our children. I have listened to the citizens of Coeur d'Alene about what they want to see in their public schools. I have helped put an end to the divisiveness that created problems for the school board in the past. I have also seen the people of Coeur d'Alene step up over and over again to support their schools, and it is time we had representatives in Boise who do the same.

Representative Sims has repeatedly failed to support public schools and she is out of step with Coeur d'Alene voters. The Idaho Constitution promises the citizens of Idaho a quality public education and she has failed to support that promise.

Representative Sims also voted against our teachers by not supporting the career ladder legislation supported by Governor Otter, his task force on education, and the majority of legislators. Citizens in Coeur d'Alene have generously supported our local schools by passing multiple bonds and levies to pick up where legislators like Rep. Sims have failed us. Her attitude toward public education does not represent the values of the people of Coeur d'Alene who strongly and consistently support our public schools.

We deserve a Representative who listens to the voice of the good people of Coeur d'Alene, and I will be that voice.

SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT AND IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH

We also need our legislators in Boise to be responsive to the community especially the requests of law enforcement. As a mental health therapist and the owner of a private mental health clinic for many years, I saw firsthand the desperate need for emergency mental health services in Coeur d'Alene. People with a mental health crisis would either be hospitalized if there was room or be incarcerated in the county jail. Law enforcement personnel and medical and mental health professionals saw a critical need for a Mental Health Crisis Center such as the one that opened in Coeur d'Alene last month. If I was in the legislature I would have been a strong advocate for such a crisis center to be in Coeur d'Alene.

One does not need to be a mental health therapist to know our community would benefit from additional mental health resources in Coeur d'Alene. We need an advocate for those in crisis and I will be that advocate.

Representative Sims did not support funding the mental health crises center and voted repeatedly against the community by opposing law enforcement's and other professional's recommendations and ignoring the needs of the community. That's not the representation in the legislature that Coeur d'Alene deserves.

People over politics is a shared value here in Coeur d'Alene and I will listen to the people instead of special interest groups.

Taking care of the needs of the most vulnerable people in our society is also simply the right thing to do, and it makes good financial sense, while saving taxpayer dollars.

Throughout my entire professional career I dealt with difficult people and difficult situations. One thing I learned is that to do that kind of work effectively one has to be very strong and clear in their values, to listen to people, and to be willing to stand up for what is right in sometimes difficult situations. I believe I have those personal qualities.

REFORM TAXES – THE STATE SHOULD DO ITS JOB

Tax reform is a major concern of mine and for all of us. If we want to have true tax reform and tax cuts which help the average citizens in Coeur d'Alene, then we should start by increasing our state funding of schools so that school districts would not be

forced to turn to the local property taxpayers to pay for schools that the legislature should be funding. In the 35 years I have lived in Coeur d'Alene these levies have significantly increased because of inadequate state funding. Supplemental levies are now nearly ¼ of the Coeur d'Alene School district's budget. During her 3 terms in the legislature Representative Sims has consistently voted for the cuts in educational funding-- thus forcing the costs of schools onto the local property taxpayer.

As any business owner knows, we need to invest money into our communities if we are to make Idaho a better place to live and raise our families. Supporting great public schools, adequate public services, infrastructure improvement for our highways and broadband infrastructure is investing in our communities. Half of our Idaho college graduates move away from Idaho within 4 years. We need to make Idaho, and Coeur d'Alene, a place where young parents can get a job that pays enough to support their families.

There was a recent proposal by some legislators that we should review all existing state tax exemptions to measure their effectiveness and necessity in promoting economic growth. We need a reasonable and open-minded voice in Boise that can review our taxing structure while focusing on action steps that will promote economic growth for Coeur d'Alene's future generations. We need to make sure our tax policies and exemptions are not just there to benefit special interests but are fair and in the interests of all our citizens.

YOU DESERVE A MORE EFFECTIVE VOICE IN BOISE

It seems to me many of the political issues now in this country and state are also moral ones:

Are we going to provide services for the poor and most vulnerable members of society? I am opposed to the recent proposed cuts to Medicaid reimbursement for the care of developmentally disabled people in Idaho.

Are we going to promote economic stability and growth? Idaho has the largest percentage of minimum wage workers in the country. I support helping businesses that pay their employees a livable wage and I support a reasonable minimum wage.

Are we going to fund our schools adequately after years of devastating cuts? The current legislative proposals, while an improvement, only restores funding to 2009 levels. This proposal does not take into account population growth in our schools in Coeur d'Alene and the rate of inflation over the past 7 years.

Are we going to provide medical care to the poorest people in this state? There are tens of thousands of people in Idaho who have no way to pay for medical care and *conservative* estimates are that 311 people in Idaho die a year due to lack of medical care. This is immoral and there is no excuse for it. Our Governor's recent health insurance proposal is inadequate and still leaves at least 78,000 Idahoans without proper medical care.

If you listen to Representative Sims and some of her supporters, they want even more tax cuts which is code for cuts in funding social programs that affect people's lives such as the mental health center or our local education.

Again, the issues before us are political, but they are also moral ones and I cannot, and we should not, remain silent or neutral to some of the politics that is happening in our great State of Idaho.

I have spent 36 years in the counseling and social work field helping people heal from their problems and working to prevent child abuse. I have learned to listen to people and I have tried to be thoughtful and reasonable, and stand up for what is right. I have only been able to do this difficult work with the support of others as well as a reliance on prayer and humbly seeking God's direction in my work.

There will be a clear choice next November in the type of representation that Coeur d'Alene sends to Boise.

If you want somebody to represent you who will fight for our children's education, I ask for your vote.

If you want somebody in Boise who will listen to the concerns of the people of Coeur d'Alene, I ask for your vote.

If you want somebody in the legislature who will stand up to politicians who vote to over-tax our hard working families while creating tax loopholes for big businesses, the wealthy, and those with political connections, I ask for your vote.

If you want somebody in Boise who will fight for true economic security and growth, who will support businesses large and small, and seek to improve the quality of life we all deserve in Coeur d'Alene, I will be that elected official, and I will work hard every day for you.

Today, as my campaign begins, I am excited to continue to listen to and learn from the people of this community. I will represent Coeur d'Alene in a manner we can all be proud of.

When I am elected, I pledge to be: "*The Change We Deserve, the Voice We Need.*" I ask for your vote on November 8th. Thank You!

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If you would like more information, or to schedule an interview
with Tom Hearn, please call 208-660-0455