



CREATING OPPORTUNITY:

A BALANCED PLAN FOR IDAHO'S FUTURE



Every Idahoan should have the opportunity to prosper. Our future relies on strong communities where businesses and workers create a robust economy that can support our families. We need high-quality schools that provide our kids with the best possible education and higher education programs that prepare young adults for a better quality of life.

Building that future requires personal accountability and hard work—and we know Idahoans are willing to work hard for their families' futures. This year, Idaho's Democratic Legislators are removing barriers that stand between Idahoans and their personal economic security.

A modern economy should have a level playing field that allows everyone who's willing to work hard and take responsibility for themselves to have an opportunity to succeed. This means making college more affordable, providing adequate funding for local schools and making sure Idahoans shouldn't have to tax themselves just to keep the lights on. People who work hard and play by the rules should get a shot at success. That's something we've always valued in Idaho.

We believe in common-sense solutions that improve our quality of life and hold government more accountable for how it uses our tax dollars. As we work together to lay a foundation for strong communities and high-quality schools, we will listen to any proposals that could make our state a better place to live and work.

To that end, we offer Creating Opportunity—an outline of our principles and legislative goals to help every Idahoan prosper—especially our next generation. We hope you'll join us in working to achieve these goals.



House Democratic Leader
John Rusche



Senate Democratic Leader
Michelle Stennett



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Building a Brighter Future For Our Children and Grandchildren

INVESTING IN EDUCATION

Putting high-quality local schools, colleges, and universities at the top of our agenda

SAFEGUARDING YOUR POCKETBOOK

Creating opportunities and improving incomes so hard-working adults can prosper

HOLDING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE

Putting hard-working people before special interests

PROTECTING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

Keeping communities strong and protecting public lands

ENSURING SECURITY FOR OUR SENIORS

Advancing lifelong independence at any age

DEFENDING YOUR RIGHTS

Protecting the freedom to vote

Investing in Education

Strong communities start with our children’s schools. Idaho’s kids deserve a world-class education with a full school week, a challenging curriculum, and a safe learning environment. We can fully prepare young Idahoans for the jobs of the future by investing in our public schools and making post-high school education more affordable for Idaho’s working families.



CREATING OPPORTUNITY BY:

- Working within our means to stop tuition hikes and keep access to post-high school education affordable.
- Giving kids a long-term advantage with a responsible pilot program for effective early childhood education.
- Investing in a complete education plan that provides full funding to our schools and programs built for a high-tech economy.
- Creating a level playing field by ensuring broadband internet access to rural communities.
- Recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, and providing them with modern professional development programs.
- Incentivizing businesses to cover education expenses of their employees.

Holding Government Accountable

Our system is broken and out of balance. The politicians calling the shots in our state legislature have focused on helping the wealthy and special interests instead of making sure that regular Idaho families have a chance to prosper. We’ll work to guarantee that our state government focuses on the right priorities that create a brighter future and real opportunity for our children and grandchildren.



CREATING OPPORTUNITY BY:

- Reviewing all tax exemptions every five years and reauthorizing them only after careful review to make sure they are working as promised.
- Holding politicians who squander our tax dollars accountable by creating an Inspector General’s office to investigate waste, fraud, and abuse in government.
- Growing Idaho businesses by giving Idaho companies first crack at state contracts.

Safeguarding Your Pocketbook

We believe that an honest day’s work deserves an honest day’s pay. For many Idahoans, wages haven’t kept up with childcare costs, college tuition, and day-to-day expenses. If Idaho is to prosper, we must improve incomes for hard-working people, support responsible investments that attract higher-paying careers and keep our graduates in Idaho.



CREATING OPPORTUNITY BY:

- Phasing in over three years a \$9.75 minimum wage to help hard-working Idahoans reach economic security.
- Easing the burden on local property taxpayers by adequately funding public education at the state level.
- Rewarding hard work with fair pay by ensuring women earn equal pay for doing the same work as men.
- Helping business prosper by investing in an educated workforce.

Protecting Our Quality of Life

Idaho Democratic Legislators strive to make Idaho a great place to live, work, and raise a family. This year, and every year, we’re doing everything we can to guarantee that each Idahoan has a strong, safe community with a high quality of life.



CREATING OPPORTUNITY BY:

- Protecting our public lands from special interest groups that put their own interests over those of regular Idahoans.
- Enforcing existing clean air and water regulations.
- Holding criminals accountable and providing justice for those who have been horribly wronged by ensuring that rape test kits are tested in a timely manner.
- Increasing access to mental health services.
- Passing the Healthy Idaho initiative and ensuring every Idahoan has access to quality care without fear of going bankrupt in the process.

Ensuring Security for Our Seniors

Access to medical care is critical to independence and quality of life for Idaho’s seniors. We will work to ensure that after a lifetime of hard work, older Idahoans have the opportunity and the resources to age at home in their communities.



CREATING OPPORTUNITY BY:

- Giving family caregivers the information they need to help loved ones age in place.
- Connecting rural seniors to remote health services with broadband internet access so they don’t have to arrange to travel long distances to receive routine care.
- Enacting the Right to Try, expanding the range of treatment options available to terminally ill patients.
- Providing incentives that help older workers displaced by the recession get retrained and learn new skills that help them compete for good-paying jobs.

Defending Your Rights

In addition to standing up for critical improvements to our education system and for more economic opportunities for hard-working Idahoans, Legislative Democrats believe we must also work to protect the constitutional rights of all Idahoans. That’s why we will introduce legislation aimed at protecting every eligible voter’s right to participate in our democracy.



CREATING OPPORTUNITY BY:

- Protecting the fundamental right of all eligible Idahoans to vote and ensuring that those who find it a challenge to vote, including people with disabilities, senior citizens, and active military, are able to participate fully in our democracy.
- Reducing our reliance on paper voter registration processes and moving to online voter registration, saving counties thousands in taxpayer dollars.

As Idahoans, we want what’s best for our children and grandchildren.



That’s true for families just about everywhere.

It’s just as true that we’ll never have complete agreement on the best way to make that happen. All Idahoans—mothers, fathers, teachers, and legislators—know one thing: we want a better, more prosperous Idaho.

Our vision is uniquely Idahoan. Our approach to the challenges facing our state is grounded in a balanced budget and a fair process that ensures Idaho’s businesses and Idaho’s people have their voices heard.

To that end, we eagerly support any ideas that have the best interests of Idahoans at heart, no matter where they come from. We’re serious about tackling the problems that exist today. There’s always room for debate.

Some things, though, are just too important—and too urgent—to let alone. When it comes to our kids’ education, there are no do-overs. When a thriving business leaves in search of a more qualified workforce, taking decades of good-paying jobs elsewhere, there are no do-overs.

Hard-working Idahoans make the most of the opportunities before them. Idaho Democratic Legislators are working to secure and create those opportunities so that every Idahoan can learn, work, and raise a family in our state.

We believe that Idahoans’ priorities are clear: strong communities, a thriving economy, and a fair shot at prosperity for everyone willing to work for it.

We can get there, but it doesn’t happen by accident: it requires commitment and vision.

We can’t wait for our problems to solve themselves, and we must work toward a brighter future - today. We are committed to a vision that puts today’s Idahoans and generations of Idahoans to come on a path to success.

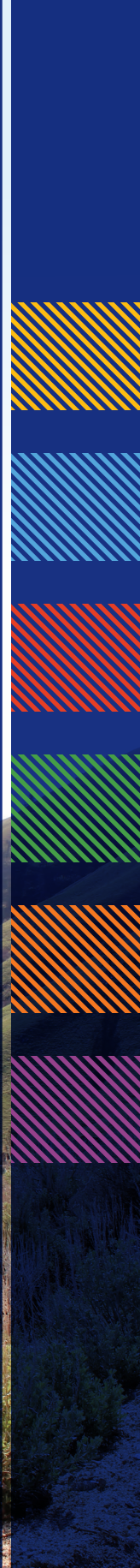




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A vision that puts today's Idahoans and generations
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Paid for by Senate Democratic Caucus, Dan Schmidt, Treasurer. Paid for by House Democratic Caucus, Mat Erpelding, Treasurer.

