

# Cheers & Jeers: Wait a year

**Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune**

**JEERS** ... to Rep. Caroline Troy, R-Genesee. Was it just a week ago Troy resolved to put the interests of 78,000 uninsured Idaho low-income workers first - and those of her own GOP House leadership second?

It took no small amount of courage for Troy - along with four of her GOP colleagues - to say she would oppose any bill, rule or measure before the House Health and Welfare Committee next year until the House votes on expanding Medicaid coverage.

Then it became time to act. Before the House was a Senate measure that would have pursued a form of Medicaid expansion by seeking a waiver from the federal government.

House GOP leaders locked down their members. On a party-line vote, the House killed the Senate Medicaid measure and went home - leaving 78,000 people with only the vaguest hope that help might be coming their way next year.

And how did Troy vote? The way her GOP leadership told her to vote.

Granted, Troy found herself in a tight spot. But here's hoping she's more resolute next year.

**CHEERS** ... to Sen. Shawn Keough, R-Sandpoint, and Rep. Luke Malek, R-Coeur d'Alene. When the Idaho Freedom Foundation gives you an "F" on its Idaho Freedom Index, you must be doing something right.

Keough and Malek were not singled out, of course. More than 50 of Idaho's 105 lawmakers got failing grades.

Reasonable, practical, problem-solving Republicans such as Keough and Malek have the most at risk, however. Both are under siege from the renegade right wing of their own party. IFF's negative rating is supposed to wound their re-election prospects in next month's closed Republican primary election.

In this case, getting a great - or even passing - grade from IFF means being led around by the nose on such things as handing out more tax goodies to the state's corporations and well-to-do, scaling back Idaho's modest public school investments and getting in the way of ordinary Idahoans deciding their own affairs in their own communities.

Talk about a fringe agenda - coming for outfit that does not disclose who gives it money.

So give Keough and Malek credit. If they're not doing IFF's bidding, it means they might be doing yours.

**JEERS** ... to Sen. Sheryl Nuxoll, R-Cottonwood, and Rep. Shannon McMillan, R-Silverton. They were among nine state lawmakers to earn an "A" from the Idaho Freedom Foundation.

That puts them in the company of state Reps. Heather Scott, R-Blanchard, and Ron Nate, R-Rexburg, as well as Sen. Bob Nonini, R-Coeur d'Alene.

Look who did not make the list: Solid conservatives such as Reps. Steve Hartgen, R-Twin Falls, and Tom Loertscher, R-Iona, drew "F's."

Sens. Dan Johnson, R-Lewiston, Steven Thayn, R-Emmett, and Steve Bair, R-Blackfoot, earned "Ds."

House Majority Leader Mike Moyle, R-Star, and Rep. Judy Boyle, R-Midvale, could rise no higher than a "C."

So what do you have to do to get IFF's highest accolade?

If you're Nuxoll, you try to cram the Bible down the throat of every public school student in the state.

And if you're McMillan, you vote against spending money on public education - and refuse to say why.

**JEERS** ... to Idaho Freedom Foundation President Wayne Hoffman. The Idaho Legislature is not following his lead.

No taxes were cut. Hoffman thinks lawmakers spent too much. And he's not happy about Idaho relying on federal support and its "continued infatuation with Obamacare."

Last week, he described the session this way: "Awful. Terrible. Pathetic. Rotten. Miserable. Disappointing."

IFF's scorecard gave nearly half the legislators failing grades.

Just the same, how does an organization that bemoans a Legislature that "failed so hard" turn around and make this claim? "The Idaho Freedom Foundation is Idaho's most influential public policy organization. ..."

Influential?

**JEERS** ... to the Asotin County commissioners. They stuck taxpayers with a \$100,000 tab because they resisted a basic premise: When it comes to public records, always extend the benefit of the doubt to the public.

Granted, Rich Eggleston of Asotin has been a persnickety critic of the county's Ten Mile Bridge project. When he asked for drawings of the proposed project, he was told the documents were in the hands of the county's contractor.

"I think the county complied with the law," Commissioner Brian Shinn told the Tribune's Kerri Sandaine.

Read between the lines of Walla Walla Judge John Lohrmann's ruling - and you're left to conclude the commissioners dragged their feet.

Lohrmann found the county "violated its duty of disclosure" by not complying with a citizen's legitimate request. He ordered the county to pay Eggleston's \$50,134 attorney fees plus \$49,385 as a penalty.

At minimum, you'd hope Shinn and his fellow commissioners would not waste any more money on an appeal.

**JEERS** ... to Congressman Raul Labrador, R-Idaho. He's not the first member of Idaho's congressional delegation to shuffle employees between official and campaign duties.

Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, pays his office business manager, Margaret Ballard of Boise, a stipend to keep an eye on the campaign books during her spare hours.

Congressman Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, pays constituent services staffer Soren Dorius a stipend to help with coordinating campaign events during evenings and weekends.

But Labrador has taken things to the next level by having Regional Director Brad Griff serve as his campaign political director.

House rules allow it because Griff now works half-time at the congressional office, where - according to the congressional information clearinghouse LegisStorm - he was earning \$72,000. The rest of the time, he moves to a campaign office in Boise.

You'll have to take Labrador's word for it that the taxpayers are not subsidizing his re-election campaign.

At least Simpson and Crapo hire separate teams to manage their campaign and congressional affairs.

Why can't Labrador?