

Residents say time for Otter to move on

Poll, locals indicate Idaho needs new blood in the governor's office

Shanon Quinn, Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Three-term Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter may have the approval of the majority of his constituents, but the majority of them say they don't want him to run for a fourth term in 2018, according to a recent political poll.

The poll, conducted by Salt Lake City-based political polling and marketing research firm Dan Jones and Associates, reported 54 percent of Idahoans said Otter should not seek re-election, while 37 percent said he should and 8 percent were unsure. That's despite the fact that 56 percent approved of Otter's governance, and 54 percent approved of the GOP-controlled Legislature's job performance.

Otter, with more than 10 years in office, is currently the longest serving governor in the nation. Prior to being elected governor in 2006, he served in the state Legislature, then U.S. House and as lieutenant governor. He has been in one public office or another for 45 years.

Latah County residents tended to agree with the majority of those polled in that Otter should not seek another four-year term.

"It's time for change," said Joe Riley, 63, of Moscow. "In fact, all of the Republicans can go."

Riley said a number of people - himself included - are struggling financially and are unable to obtain health insurance. Riley who moved back to Moscow from New Mexico last year, said the state would benefit from some programs that would address such issues.

"I don't have a lot of money," he said. "I don't have health insurance. In New Mexico I could get Medicaid, but not here."

Marc Galbraith, a retired San Diego police officer and Vietnam veteran, said he didn't have any complaints about the governor.

"I think he's doing a good job," Galbraith said.

Galbraith, who lives in Deary, said he is more concerned about the Legislature, particularly after the most recent election.

"I don't like that new senator, (Dan) Foreman," he said, adding he is pleased with the recent grocery tax repeal passed by the Legislature. Otter has previously not supported doing away with the tax and may still veto the bill.

Hillary Baxter, a 31-year-old Moscow resident, said she would not vote for Otter in 2018.

"It's time for a change-up," she said.

Baxter said she is concerned with the state of politics in Idaho as a whole, and she believes residents in the central and northern portions of the state are ignored.

"They're obviously not representing their constituents," she said.

Genoa Beiser, 26, of Moscow, said Americans are becoming tired of career politicians, which is why Donald Trump is currently in the White House.

Baxter, Beiser and 25-year-old Moscow resident Aubrey Johnson agreed they would like to see more women and more diversity in general in the Legislature.

"No more panels of white males over 70 deciding women's health care issues," Johnson said.

Beiser said one of her big concerns is the environment, and the way Otter feels about those issues would determine how she would vote.

"If he's not supporting that I can't support him," she said.

A total of 628 adults were polled from Feb. 16-28. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.91 percent.

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