

**For Immediate Release**  
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**Andrus Center for Public Policy**  
**Boise, ID**

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## **Cecil D. Andrus, Legendary Idaho Political Leader, Dies in Boise**

Cecil D. Andrus, a Democrat, and the only Idahoan elected four times as the state's governor and who also served as secretary of the Interior under President Jimmy Carter, has died in Boise. He was 85 years old. Andrus' death late Thursday resulted from complications related to lung cancer and was confirmed by family spokesperson Tracy Andrus

First elected governor of Idaho in 1970, Andrus was just 39-years old and quickly drew national attention as one of the first western politicians to seek office as a champion of conservation. During that campaign he advocated for the protection of Castle Peak, an iconic 11,815-foot snow capped mountain in central Idaho's White Cloud Mountains. Asarco, a major mining company, had proposed development of an open pit molybdenum mine at the base of Castle Peak. Andrus' Republican opponent supported the mine project. Andrus was also known for his campaigns to improve Idaho public education, including helping to create kindergarten programs for the first time. He also diversified the state's natural resource dependent economy, occasionally taking positions at odds with the national Democratic Party.

Andrus, a strapping 6'2" former "gyppo logger," harbored a deep affection for Idaho, the West and the nation's public lands. He displayed political and governing skills rivaling any governor of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Idaho has elected only one statewide Democrat since he left office in 1995. Born in Hood River, Oregon on August 25, 1931, Andrus studied engineering at Oregon State University before enlisting in the United States Navy during the Korean War. He served as a crewmember based in Japan, flying reconnaissance missions over the Korean peninsula.

Following military service Andrus and his wife Carol moved to Orofino, Idaho where he worked as a lumberjack and sawmill worker. Inspired in part by hearing a speech in Lewiston, Idaho by then Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy, Andrus successfully challenged an incumbent Republican in a state senate race in 1960. The issue in the election was education, a cause Andrus championed for the rest of his career. At age 29 he became the youngest Idaho legislator in the 1961 session. Andrus lost the 1966 Democratic primary race for governor to a fellow state senator Charles Herndon, who was then killed in a plane crash six weeks before the general election. The party's state central committee, with the strong support of then-Senator Frank Church, selected Andrus to replace Herndon. Andrus subsequently lost the general election to Republican Don Samuelson. He often quipped that he had the rare distinction of losing the governorship twice in the same year. Andrus and

Church would go on to form a potent political partnership that dominated Idaho politics for a generation.

In a rematch with Samuelson in 1970, Andrus was elected by a 10,000-vote margin. He successfully set about to reorganize state government, enhance the economy and erase a budget deficit without increasing taxes. He won a second term in a landslide in 1974 after championing educational improvements and environmental policies, including stream channel protection and the development of a state water plan. During this period Andrus became friends with another young and often unconventional Democrat, then-Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter. Carter, who selected Andrus to run the Interior Department during his presidency, said he never considered anyone else for the job.

Andrus served four years as secretary of the Interior and had declared his intention to return to Idaho regardless of the outcome of the 1980 presidential election. The highlight of his Interior tenure was the landmark Alaska Lands legislation, finally passed during the lame duck session of Congress in 1980. The legislation added to or created 13 national parks, 16 wildlife refuges, 2 national forests, 2 national monuments, 2 conservation areas, and 26 wild and scenic rivers. The legislation protected more than 104 million acres in Alaska for future generations.

As the Carter Administration's architect of the conservation legislation, Andrus convinced Carter to invoke the authority of the 1906 Antiquities Act in order to conserve vast stretches of wild Alaska as national monuments and wildlife refuges. Andrus always claimed the use of the controversial law was merely a strategy to force recalcitrant Alaska lawmakers to settle claims over management of the state's lands that dated to statehood. Alaska Republican Senator Ted Stevens initially resisted the scale of the conservation effort in his energy rich state, but came to regard Andrus as an astute political operator and honest broker. Andrus in turn praised Stevens as a tough, but honest opponent whose word was good.

After returning to Idaho in 1981, Andrus operated his own consulting business in Boise and served on various corporate boards. In 1986 he sought the governorship for a third time and prevailed by a razor thin margin in a hard fought race against incumbent lieutenant governor, David H. Leroy. Andrus followed through on campaign pledges to enhance the state's economic development efforts - he appointed a prominent Republican businessman to head the state's Commerce Department - and, while he was often at odds with the GOP dominated state legislature he forced through increased appropriations for Idaho schools. During his entire time as governor Andrus never enjoyed a Democratic majority in either house of the state legislature, but still had only one veto overturned during his tenure.

Andrus often made the point that economic development and respect for the environment were not mutually exclusive goals. "First, you must make a living, but you must have a living that is worthwhile," summed up much of his bipartisan political appeal, as did his personal connection with the state's thousands of hunters and anglers. He rarely missed an October elk hunt and was instrumental in

convincing Carter to take up fly-fishing. His well-known love of hunting and ownership of many firearms did not prevent the National Rifle Association (NRA) from targeting Andrus for defeat in 1986. He responded by labeling the NRA "the gun nuts of the world" and labeled the group as little more than a partisan front to promote Republican candidates. When asked why he supported a ban on so called "cop killer bullets," Andrus said he had "never seen an elk wearing a bullet proof vest."

Elected for an unprecedented fourth time in 1990 - he won with nearly 70 percent of the vote - Andrus continued to champion environmental protections and successfully challenged the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) over storage of nuclear waste in Idaho. At the height of his confrontation with DOE Andrus ordered the Idaho State Police to impound and turn back a rail car carrying waste material. Federal officials backed down, removed the rail car and ceased further shipments from the DOE's Colorado facility at Rocky Flats. Andrus then took DOE to court and ultimately forced federal agencies to observe the same environmental laws that private businesses must comply with. Andrus ultimately worked with his successor Republican Phil Batt to enforce Batt's historic agreement on nuclear waste storage and environmental clean up.

During the 1990 legislative session Andrus, who had long opposed abortion with the exception of cases of rape, incest and when the life of the mother was threatened, vetoed what would have been the nation's most restrictive anti-abortion legislation. The legislation was pushed by national anti-abortion groups as a test case to challenge the landmark Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision. "When I consider what is best for Idaho, I must consider my own views and the needs of Idaho," Andrus said in vetoing the legislation. "This bill satisfies neither. I did not take the oath of office to put my name on bad legislation."

During the course of his career Andrus served as chairman of both the Western and National Governors Associations. He left office in January 1995 having served more than 14 years as the Democratic governor of one of the most Republican states in the nation. Andrus' tenure ranks him as the 11 th longest serving governor in United States history. Public opinion polls have consistently shown him to be the most popular public figure in Idaho. He continued until his death to serve as chairman of the Andrus Center for Public Policy at Boise State University.

In 2008, long in political retirement, Andrus introduced then Senator Barack Obama before 14,000 Idahoans at a raucous rally at Boise State University. He called the young Illinois senator "the real thing." Andrus was not always as generous with national Democrats or the party who he believed often did not understand or appreciate the rural West and took positions that western Democrats found difficult to defend.

While nearly always a loyal Democrat, Andrus developed many enduring relationships with Republicans, including Dan Evans, a Washington state governor and senator, and Tom McCall, an outspoken liberal Republican from Oregon. The

trio crossed party lines to cooperate on regional policy and exchanged personal endorsements. Andrus endorsed Evans' run for the U.S. Senate in 1983, as McCall had done for him in 1974. Evans in turn endorsed Andrus during his 1986 run. Andrus - Cece to many Idahoans - also maintained close friendships with the Republican who succeeded him as governor, Phil Batt, and with Wyoming GOP Senator Alan Simpson.

Andrus is survived by his wife Carol - they were married in 1949 - and by daughters Tana, Tracy and Kelly and grandchildren Monica, Morgan and Andrew and great granddaughter Casey.

Andrus often referred to himself as "a political accident," but engendered widespread support across the political spectrum thanks to a warm personality, a candid, outspoken style and an infectious sense of humor. He never met a stranger and worked every room with a firm handshake and self-deprecating jokes.

His sense of humor, occasionally including a piercing barb directed at a political opponent, was frequently on display in his dealing with Republican state legislators. On one such occasion, while locked in a budget disagreement with the majority GOP legislature, Andrus was asked by a reporter if GOP legislators could be trusted to do right by the state's public schools. He replied with a smile and a quip, telling reporters if they believed Republican claims he had "a deal for them at Fairly Reliable Bob's," a well-known Boise used car lot. Following press reports of the comment the owner of the car lot placed a message on his reader board - it read simply "Thanks Cece!"

Funeral arrangements, which will be private, are planned for Wednesday, August 30 in Boise. A public lying in state ceremony will follow at noon on Wednesday in the Idaho Capitol rotunda and continue until noon on August 31. A public memorial service is planned for 2:00 pm Thursday, August 31 in the Jordan Ballroom of the Boise State University Student Union.

In lieu of flowers the Andrus family suggests memorial gifts to the Andrus Center for Public Policy at Boise State University, which is dedicated to furthering his life's work and legacy. The family warmly thanks each and every individual who has sent cards, letters and flowers and wishes it were possible to personally acknowledge each expression of concern and caring. Please know that your well wishes have meant so much to the entire family as they attempt to deal with the loss of our husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather.

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