

# Who's Butch trying to kid?

Published: Tuesday, April 19, 2011 1:34 PM PDT  
CHRIS CARLSON, The Carlson Chronicle

What's that old saying about facts and folks tendency to believe what they say even though it just ain't so? Or that other expression: "denial is not just a river in Egypt."

Both phrases should come to mind as any thinking person reads Governor C. L. "Butch" Otter's recent post-session comments. He gave the just concluded session of the Idaho Legislature a letter grade of A. Seriously, Governor? Can you be that far removed from reality?

Many Idahoans like the Governor. His ability to discharge the duties of the office, however, is deplorable. He is doing serious long-term damage to the state and its citizenry. Most thoughtful Idahoans never dreamed it could be this bad. I sure didn't. Where to begin?

How about the incredible insult to all Idahoans by signing the bill that paid the Republican Party \$100,000 of your tax dollars to cover the Republican Party's legal fees to overturn the state's primary law and deny independents, as well as other mug-wumps sitting on the political fence the chance to vote in the GOP primary?

If the Democratic Party had brought such a suit and won, he would have gone stratospheric. He knows it. You know it. Apparently he doesn't subscribe to the axiom about what's good for the goose is good for the gander?

Or how about his lame reasoning on signing the legislation that added "emergency clauses" to the educational reform bills State Schools Superintendent Tom Luna and he pushed through the Legislature? These "leaders" of the people believe citizens shouldn't be given 60 days to get signatures on petitions to establish a referendum that aims to overturn their questionable "reforms."

Thus, the self-described penny-pinching Republicans once again will have wasted precious state dollars, but who's watching and who cares? They are the super-majority and believe they can do as they please because they are never wrong.

The biggest canard the Governor uttered though, was saying his proudest achievement was balancing the budget without raising taxes. Seriously, Governor? You well know that one of the fallouts of your draconian, fear-based budgeting is that most school districts around the state will seek over-ride levies to make up for funding losses.

That's a tax increase, pure and simple. You are responsible for that, and you ought to be man enough to own up to it. Your actions are going to result in more money being taken

out of most every taxpayer's pockets for a service the Constitution mandates be the priority for the state. Don't play games. Don't parse words like a Bill Clinton. You fool no one but yourself---and maybe not even that..

(Incidentally, Governor Otter is going to lose a wager former Governor Cecil D. Andrus made with him on revenue projections for the coming year. For transparently political reasons, Butch deliberately underestimated the figure. Andrus called him on it and came much closer. We'll see whether he pays the \$100 he owes.

The Governor also tried to justify his signing a bill further restricting abortion. He is a practicing Catholic (as am I), but no one believes if one of his daughters had been raped, or was told at 20 weeks that the child she was carrying would be born with no brain, he would look her in the eye and tell her she had to carry the child to term because that was the law.

Yes, we should err on the side of protecting life from conception to natural death, but reality can have circumstances less than ideal where compassion for the mother and her private right to decide an extreme and rare set of circumstances is between her, her family, faith and doctor.

Once again, the state will spend precious diminishing resources on an ideological foray into the never-never land of right wing social policy.

If Governor Otter is truly concerned about protecting the lives of Idahoans, especially from unnecessary risks, he should have thought more carefully about his unfathomable signing of an amendment to the 1995 Nuclear Waste agreement the State worked out with the Department of Energy and the U.S. Navy to restrict the importation of nuclear waste into Idaho.

The disaster at Fukushima demonstrated how easily cooling ponds that hold spent fuel rods can be ruptured, lose water and cause a radiation release. Yet with Idaho getting absolutely nothing in return for amending the agreement, Idaho is accepting for the first time ever nearly 1000 pounds per year for twenty years of commercial nuclear plant spent fuel rods .

Lots of phrases come to mind: dereliction of duty, misplaced priorities, drinking the kool-aid, believing your own rhetoric.

The governor gave the Legislature and, by implication, himself a grade of A. By his standard the voyage of the Titanic would have gotten an A plus. History and the passage of time will assign him the F he deserves. Sad.

A native of Kellogg, a former teacher at Kootenai, and a former journalist, Chris served as press secretary to former Idaho Governor Cecil D. Andrus for ten years. He is the founding partner of the Gallatin Group, is now retired and he and his wife, Marcia, reside at Medimont.