

## **OUR VIEW**

### **If Congress is a joke, what's the Legislature?**

By **Lee Rozen**, for the Moscow-Pullman Daily News editorial board |

You might think it would be difficult to find a new way to insult Congress.

Back in 1873, Mark Twain said, "I never can think of Judas Iscariot without losing my temper. To my mind, Judas Iscariot was nothing but a low, mean, premature, Congressman."

And in the 1930s, humorist Will Rogers said, "This country has come to feel the same when Congress is in session as when the baby gets hold of a hammer."

But it seems that Moscow's congressman, first-term Republican Raul Labrador, has found a way.

Early last week, he said Congress is worse than the Idaho Legislature.

Quite a putdown, that.

The Spokesman's Betsy Z. Russell wrote that Labrador told the Idaho House and Senate since he's been in Washington, D.C., "My appreciation for the Idaho Legislature has only grown more."

"I love working here because there is a true sense of duty that transcends party affiliation in the Idaho Legislature. This is not the case in Congress," Labrador declared. "I have seen a sense of duty and service take a back seat to the goal of only scoring political points."

Here's the sort of bipartisan language, full of duty and service, Labrador spoke earlier this year: "Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and his Democratic colleagues seem uninterested in making meaningful cuts to save this country's financial future. I call on President Obama to use tonight's platform of the State of the Union address to finally hold the U.S. Senate accountable for the utter disarray they've created for our fragile economy."

Does that sounds like the sort of guy any Democrat would be interested in working with?

Perhaps he remembers how easy it was to be bipartisan in the Idaho Legislature, where Democrats are utterly powerless and the only threat to the conservative Republican leadership comes from moderate Republicans. People like longtime Rep. Tom Trail from Moscow, who was stripped of his committee chairmanship last year for showing the tiniest bit of resistance to the dictated program.

Even Labrador admits things are getting worse: "Over the last year here in Idaho - the rhetoric is ratcheting up, and I don't think that's necessary."

Yes, leave it for Congress.