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Denney, Moyle just dropped their drawers

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Marty Trillhaase |

Lawrence Denney, R-Midvale, the speaker of the Idaho House of Representatives, has dropped his trousers.

Also parading around in his undergarments is House Majority Leader Mike Moyle, R-Star.



They've been waging a reign of terror inside the House for years.

People who go along with the leadership get favorable treatment. Phil Hart, R-Athol, doesn't have to pay his taxes. Tom Loertcher, R-Iona, can use his chairmanship to promote his interests at home. Joe Palmer, R-Meridian, can try to block Boise cops from handing out more parking tickets to his son.

But let Eric Anderson, R-Priest Lake, challenge Hart's ethics and he loses a committee vice chairmanship.

When Tom Trail, R-Moscow, or Leon Smith, R-Twin Falls, disappoint the speaker with a vote, they lose their chairmanships.

If a company hires a lobbyist who is out of favor with the leadership, that company is told to get a new lobbyist right quick.

No wonder you've seen the great migration this year - wave upon wave of veteran Republican lawmakers are leaving the House in frustration.

All of this, however, was done behind closed doors. Few witnesses.

Now Denney and Moyle have exposed themselves in public.

Using funds from the speaker's House Victory fund and other accounts such as GunPAC, the leadership is going after six incumbents in

Tuesday's first-ever closed GOP primary election. Among those being targeted: House Caucus Chairman Ken Roberts, R-Donnelly.

In Roberts' case, it's strictly personal, not business.

Roberts had the nerve to break with Moyle earlier this year about helping Boise County raise taxes to pay a multi-million-dollar judgment filed against it in U.S. District Court.

But most of all, he got in Moyle's way.

"He lied to me last year and tried to take me out of leadership," Moyle told The Associated Press' John Miller. "He let me know that if he comes back, he would try to do it again. I'm going to send a little love his way, so people know how he votes and how he is. When somebody threatens me, I take it seriously. It's nothing personal. But he's made it clear he doesn't like me."

Among the ironies: Denney's predecessors established the Victory Fund to help GOP candidates win elections against Democrats, not impose a purity test in the primary.

Roberts is the fund's treasurer.

Some of the dollars in that account came from the same people it's now being used against.

And, as is so often the case when he gets caught, Denney says he's shocked, simply shocked, that the money wound up being used against GOP incumbents.

"As far as the House members, I think it's poor form to work against incumbents in a primary," he told the Idaho Statesman's Dan Popkey.

When somebody drops his drawers in front of you, it usually means he doesn't care too much about your opinion. Laugh. Shout. Walk away. Doesn't matter to him.

Moyle is unopposed. Denney hails from a GOP-dominated district. They're confident that Idaho will retain its one-party status in November, no matter how many fringe candidates win the GOP nomination in the primary.

You do not scare them.

All of which means your fate and that of your fellow Idahoans are tied to the better angels of the GOP nature. Perhaps next winter, the newly elected GOP House majority will tire of Denney and Moyle and overthrow their leadership.

Otherwise, the state will remain chained to another term of Tony Soprano tactics.

Hey, what are you gonna do?

Vote for the Democrats?

Really? - M.T.

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