

Wayne's Top 10 Suggestions for the 2013 Legislature

Wayne Hoffman/Idaho Freedom Foundation

Ah, it's that time of year again. Here are my Top 10 suggestions for the new Legislature:

1. Cut taxes. I'd like to see the personal property tax go away. But many other cuts and changes to the state's burdensome and unwieldy tax code would also be welcome. Get to it.
2. Keep spending down. Last legislative session saw a nearly 7 percent increase in general fund spending. That's unsustainable and must stop.
3. Fix Medicaid. Don't expand it. Medicaid is broken and consuming more and more of taxpayer resources every year. Florida has implemented some excellent reforms that help improve patient care and reduce costs. Idaho should look at those success stories and replicate them.
4. Incentivize charitable delivery options to help Idaho's neediest. Idahoans are very giving. Let's put that giving power to work to help people in our community and reduce reliance on government.
5. Continue education reforms. There's no reason our children should have to wait longer for a full spectrum of education options that improve and expand their access to academic excellence.
6. Stop Obamacare. There's not a lot about Justice John Roberts' Obamacare decision that I like. But this quote from Roberts I love: "The states are separate and independent sovereigns. Sometimes they have to act like it." Act like it. Be the backstop against bad federal policy. Join the two dozen other states that have rejected health insurance exchanges and other Obamacare implementation tactics.
7. Improve health care and lower health care costs by opening Idaho's marketplace to insurance carriers from outside our state borders. Allow companies to employ doctors, if they choose to do so. Consider other free market health care reforms, such as the health savings option being proposed by Idaho's Dr. Loel Fenwick.
8. Restore private property rights. Throughout the state, property owners are struggling with harsh local ordinances that prevent or inhibit residential and commercial development. It's time for the Legislature to reset the regulatory clock and put private property on a pedestal where it belongs.
9. Reject new occupational licensing schemes. I understand that at least two proposals to license occupations are in the works for the coming session. These licensure requirements do nothing but make it harder for lower- and middle-income people to improve their economic outlook, while protecting incumbent businesses and licensees. For consumers, it drives up costs. Just say no.
10. Repeal stuff. Idaho is full of government-centric laws that make great sense—if you live in Libya. Laws that ban Black Friday sales. Laws that make government a retailer (such as with liquor). Laws that tell businesses how to sell frozen yogurt. Laws that restrict a person's ability to protect his home and property. It's time to put all of these

policies under a microscope, because when you look at them up close and personal, it's rather ugly, not good for our state or for freedom.

I believe most Idahoans hope to see a Legislature that embraces free markets, limited government, lower taxes and fewer regulations. The true measure of the weeks ahead will not be how many laws are passed but how much freer or how much less free we are once the session concludes.