

Labrador involved in failed child support bill

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — U.S. Republican Rep. Raul Labrador involved himself in the fallout of failed Idaho legislation that would have brought the state into compliance with federal child support rules and an international treaty.

Labrador says he doesn't have a position on the issue, but the tea party-favorite told The Associated Press he reviewed an April 12 editorial sent out by a key lawmaker after the vote.

State Rep. Lynn Luker of Boise says Labrador offered suggestions and edits to his opinion piece via email. Luker turned over more than 700 pages of emails and other documents to the AP in response to a records request, but the emails between Luker and Labrador were not included.

Luker says he had deleted those emails because they were sent from a private account.

"I often delete emails from my private account to keep it organized," Luker said. "I used a private account this time because it was handy."

Luker's editorial defended the decision he and eight other lawmakers made to kill the bill, arguing the federal government was bullying Idaho.

The only record of Labrador's involvement provided to AP was in an email exchange dated to April 11 with Idaho House caucus spokeswoman Cindy Agidius, "Cindy, Raul suggested we keep it simple. ... If people have questions, we can provide more information."

Since the bill's surprise death, state health officials have warned that Idaho's ability to collect and distribute out-of-state child support payments will end in mid-June. The situation has forced all eyes on Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter to see if he will call a special legislative session to pass the Uniform Interstate Family Security Act.

The federal government is requiring all states to pass the act or risk losing federal funding and tools used to track and collect child support payments. Idaho has been in compliance with previous version, but this year's bill would have brought Idaho and the U.S. into compliance with an international treaty. Called the 2007 Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support, the treaty allows participating countries to enforce child support rulings across borders.

Labrador added he was unaware of the controversy prior to the bill being killed. He found about the bill's fate while traveling in northern Idaho.

The AP requested the email exchange between Luker and Labrador to the congressman's office. However, congress is exempt from the federal public records law. Labrador's office has not yet responded to the records request.

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