



Speaker Bedke
Representative Wood
Senator Cameron
District 27 – Cassia & Minidoka Counties

DISTRICT 27 e-NEWSLETTER – January 27, 2014

This is the first of a series of weekly newsletters we hope to send this session. The legislature is in full swing as we hope to accomplish the people’s business and have a quick session. Our days are filled with meetings, hearings and appointments where we are listening to the concerns, desires and requests of others.

Speaker Scott Bedke

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I had the opportunity to speak at the Andrus Center, where I shared my beliefs about how to approach the legislature, I told them that most people will go to a meeting and not have anything other than criticism. But if they go with any type of an idea, then that will be the canvas that everybody else will start painting on, and then you can engage the group on solving the problems. I am dedicated to working with all members and listening to all members’ suggestions to improve our great state. I am grateful to have been given this opportunity. To read more about this speech, click [here](#).

In an effort to make our taxes more competitive and attract jobs, I also proposed an adjustment to the grocery tax credit which allows income tax relief to all. Idaho citizens and businesses are currently paying 7.4% income tax currently, a rate that is higher than surround states. My proposal would decrease the rate to 6.95% to make Idaho more competitive. For a full story about this from KTVB, click [here](#).

Representative Fred Wood

Phone: 332-1138 Email: fwood@house.idaho.gov

This week we had the first annual report from Your Health Idaho Health Insurance Exchange, led by Gov. Otter. Idaho’s Legislature adopted the Idaho Health insurance Exchange last year in order to prevent a federal exchange, to protect Idaho citizens and retain our state sovereignty. This allows us to “maintain maximum control of Idaho’s health insurance marketplace at minimal costs to its citizens.” So far

20,000 people have enrolled; and the report shows significant differences from those states that went with the federal exchange versus our state exchange.

- Idahoans pay only a 1.5% of the premium tax, as opposed to federal exchange states that pay a 3.5% premium tax.
- Idaho citizens are running our exchange as opposed to federal employees.
- Idaho is using agents/brokers and trained in-person assisters, who must undergo background checks and be fingerprinted. Federal exchange states have navigators that receive contracts not based on insurance industry standards.

Idaho was fortunate that it got to watch a few other states implement a state exchange, which allowed for more time to see what does and does not work. Our technology systems have passed security tests, and the rules have been changed to prevent any conflicts of interest from occurring. To see the full report, click [here](#).

Besides our normal meetings I conducted a well- attended public hearing on health and welfare issues. We are committed to continue working to improve our health and welfare systems so we can better serve Idahoans.

Senator Dean Cameron

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Since the beginning of the session, the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee has been holding budget hearings from state agencies on their requests for fiscal year 2015. This week we focused mostly on education. We heard from all of our university and community college presidents. The governor has recommended universities receive \$469,025,500 and community colleges receive \$33,593,700. We also heard from Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna. The public schools budget is the largest and most important budget of the year and both the governor and Superintendent Luna are proposing significant increases. Public schools receive nearly 50% of our state general fund revenue, or almost \$1.4billion.

One of the major discussion areas in the public schools budget is how to reward and retain our public school teachers. All of us recognize that the importance of our children's success is dependent on our of our teachers in the classroom. The governor's task force proposed developing a new career ladder to reward and attract our excellent teachers. Unfortunately, the development of the career ladder is not complete; therefore Superintendent Luna proposed leadership rewards of \$16 million which is a component of the recommendation. I believe that leadership rewards should not take the place of an adjustment in the salary base of our teachers and district employees. Obviously, we will be working for some level of compromise over the next few weeks.

Next week we will hear from natural resource agencies and will begin to talk about some of the tough decisions to be made regarding our state budget. As usual there are more requests than money. We will

do our best to balance the needs and our priorities as we move forward. To see JFAC live streaming during the week, click [here](#).

Constituent question: Over the last three weeks we've received numerous emails on a proposed rule change by the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Board. The rule has to do with waterfowl and turkey guiding or outfitting. Based on the public input, both the Senate Resources and Environments Committee of which Senator Cameron is a member and the House Resources and Conservation Committee of which Representative Wood is a member, rejected the rule. We both voted to reject the proposed rule.

With Appreciation

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve our legislative district and state. It is truly a privilege that we greatly appreciate and do not take for granted. Please feel free to share your thoughts, ideas, or suggestions by emailing us or calling our offices. Often the best ideas come from constituents, like you. Please feel free to share this newsletter with others. If they would like to be added to our mailing list please send us an email.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Fred Dean". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed names of the signatories.

Scott Bedke, Fred Wood, Dean Cameron
District 27
Idaho State Legislature