

Candidate Statement

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SECRETARY OF STATE
STATE OF IDAHO

Name: Ken Meyers

Office Title: State Senator - District 7

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1. Biography

I was born in Great Falls, Montana, in 1942 and raised 65 miles north of there on a wheat farm in Big Sky country. I attended Montana State College and graduated with a B.S. degree in Zoology from Oregon State University. I received my doctorate from Washington State University (WSU) and joined the faculty of the College of Veterinary Medicine at WSU. As a Professor of Veterinary Physiology, Director of Admissions, and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, my focus was to help animals and find solutions for human diseases through research. I also spent 30 years educating students so that they could go into society to make a positive difference. My experiences as an educator, administrator, and scientist taught me that progress is about keeping your eye on the goal, making continual small steps toward the goal, and most importantly, working collaboratively with others.

My wife, Judy, and I left the university and moved to our home on Lake Pend Oreille where I serve as Chair of the Bonner County Democrat Central Committee and the Gamlin Lake precinct captain. I am a member of St Joseph Catholic Church and a Eucharistic minister. I have been President of our Sourdough Point Homeowner Association and occasionally volunteer at the Panida Theater in Sandpoint. We have four children and seven grandchildren.

2. In 2007-2008 we had an economic disaster, the Great Recession. Idaho's economic recovery has been led by the Republican controlled Legislature. For Idahoans this has not worked well. Other states are economically recovering much faster and have made more progress than we have. Idaho needs a change or we will continue to lag behind the rest of the country.

Our state government...

- needs to be more effective. Idaho should not need a Constitutional Defense fund to defend unconstitutional laws. This Defense fund has not won a case in over 15 years and spent over \$700,00 in attorney fees and plaintiff awards in 2015 -- \$200,00 wasted this year alone.
- should be responsive to its citizens. The majority of Idahoans recognize the economic benefit of increasing the minimum wage. Money locally earned does not leave but quickly enters the local economy. I would work toward putting legislative action in motion to raise the minimum wage.

I like many of you support closing the Medicaid gap. There are 78,000 working poor Idahoans who are not eligible for Medicaid. They earn too much to be eligible for health insurance through Medicaid and too little to afford private insurance. This is a moral issue and places a significant burden on our counties' budget. These folks end up seeking medical aid through local emergency rooms.

- fund education so our children are properly educated for success. The legislature and governor recognize the need to increase support education, but funding is still inadequate. We now fund education at the 2009 level, which was low even then. If Idaho is to be better, we need to get serious about educating our children. This includes improving early access to education, enhancing high school and post K-12 educational opportunities, and expanding career counseling.
- support a strong economy that has a thriving middle class. This is the most critical issue facing District 7. District 7 has high unemployment and the lowest per capita income in Idaho. A lagging economy is a major issue for all of Idaho. Idaho's economy is complicated; there is no silver bullet to growth. Transportation, education and the environment must all work together to drive progress. The steps to make Idaho better involve cooperation across state and local government, business, community members, and educators.

- should have a natural resource policy that provides recreational and economic opportunities while protecting this legacy for future generations. Almost 80% of District 7 is government land. This presents a real property tax burden on the District's counties. It is a problem that needs to be addressed. A guiding principle of efforts to address having an economic benefit must be to insure that the forest and rivers are accessible today and for future generations.