



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on May 21, 2014

Idaho PAC Accuses GOP Governor of Betrayal of Party and Principle

Republicans throughout Idaho are claiming that Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter (shown) has “a history of betraying the Republican Party,” and are trying to make his second term his last.



Writing an op-ed in the *Idaho Statesman*, GOP activist Doyle Beck claims that reports of “scandal after scandal” and “repeated allegations of cronyism” against Otter are true and that Otter has “lost his way.”

Beck’s not alone in his assessment of Otter’s Republican bona fides. A new PAC formed in March is raising money to “elect men and women with integrity to elected office in the state of Idaho,” of which Otter apparently isn’t one.

In an open letter published on its Facebook page, the Integrity in Government PAC echoes Beck’s accusation that Otter has strayed from his earlier conservative commitments, claiming the governor “is not the man [they] once supported,” and he “no longer supports conservative principles.”

Recently, the *Idaho Statesman* provided a brief history of the PAC’s formation:

Lee Ann Callear, the PAC’s chair, is an Idaho Republican Party executive committee member and Region 2 chairwoman. She formed the PAC with three other central Idaho residents and Doyle Beck of Idaho Falls, who is the Bonneville County Republican Party chairman.

“We’ve never done this before,” said Callear, of Ahsahka. “I’m trying to expose some of the things that I think are corrupt in Idaho government, just like Butch Otter saying that our economy is in such good shape, and I don’t believe that.”

Since it formed in March, the PAC had raised just under \$20,000, mostly from out-of-state individuals and couples, but also including \$2,000 from the Idaho County Republican Central Committee and \$1,700 from the Clearwater County Republican Central Committee.

Then, in the past week, the Integrity in Government PAC suddenly raised \$107,000 in nine big donations, six of those from residents of the Idaho Falls area, including two-time GOP congressional candidate and longtime John Birch Society organizer Chick Heileson, and the other three from Utah and Wyoming.

“I know a lot of people,” Callear said. “They want to send it to someone who’s honest, and I do have that reputation.” She added that she hopes to “counter some of the big money that is coming from the lobbyists.”

The PAC’s letter outlines 12 “serious allegations” against Otter and provides short summaries of the governor’s blameworthy actions. Although many of the charges pertain to matters particular to Idaho, there are three of them that merit mention here as they touch and concern the Constitution and the underlying principle of federalism.



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“Federal Dependency Grows Under Otter, Rejects State Sovereignty” is the second of Integrity in Government’s list of Otter’s sins against the Republican Party and is the first of the three we will report.

According to information provided by the group, during the Butch Otter administration, Idaho “is more dependent on the federal government than ever before.” Citing figures published by the Idaho Freedom Foundation, the PAC claims, “Since 2003, the state’s reliance on the federal government has grown 82 percent, and the state now uses federal money to sustain more than 440 government programs.”

Otter, the group, insists, has promised to address the imbalance, but has done nothing to fulfill those promises.

The Integrity in Government PAC makes a very timely and damning allegation, especially given the recent events in neighboring Nevada and the federal government’s effort to seize control of lands located within that state. The PAC’s letter reads:

Otter also appears quite comfortable with the federal government’s control over state land. Other states, including Utah, have specifically called for states to assert their control over the land inside their borders. Idaho Republicans have passed a resolution in support of states controlling their own land. Otter even attended a meeting of the state Republican Central Committee, asking state GOP officials to support state control of public lands. Otter is an outlier. He said such an idea is a bad one, and instead and wants to work out a deal where Idaho gets to be property managers for the federal government. In other words, we’d get to do the federal government’s bidding for land that remains locked up and underutilized.

It’s not difficult to see how such serious accusations, if proven true, could cause trouble for Otter in this era of federal overreach and attempts at ownership over millions of acres of Western land.

The next violation of the Republican Party’s trust as asserted by Integrity in Government PAC is: “Otter Opposes the Free Market, Supports Corporate Welfare.” Specifically, the organization reports: “In 2014, his administration brought another bill to give a tax break ... to businesses that hire 20 new employees in rural areas or 50 new employees in urban areas. His crony friends in the Department of Commerce will get to decide whether businesses are deserving or not of the tax break.”

And, it gets worse: “In 2014, Otter signed into law a bill that gives a rebate to Big Hollywood for bringing a production here. That means liberals like Bill Mahr [sic], Michael Moore and Chris Matthews can get some of your money if they decide to do work in Idaho!”

The last of the “betrayals” committed by Governor Otter, as chronicled by the PAC, is perhaps the most serious: “Otter Supports Obamacare.”

Relating a story that has unfortunately been told in several states, Integrity in Government PAC reports that despite having originally supported a bill nullifying the “optional” provisions of ObamaCare within the Gem State (HB 298), when the legislature sent the measure to his desk for signing, Otter vetoed it!

There was, however, the PAC claims, more to the deception than just a broken promise and a veto. “While Otter was talking up nullification in his State of the State, his budget for that same year called for the Department of Insurance to collect \$2.5 million from the federal government to start putting the insurance exchange in place.”

Although Otter struggled to get his planned ObamaCare exchange approved by members of his own party, he reportedly worked with Democrats to push the proposal through the legislature. This perfidy made Idaho “the only Republican-controlled state to implement an Obamacare insurance exchange.”



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After making these condemning allegations of self-dealing and unalloyed betrayal of his party and his principles, Integrity in Government PAC insists that the letter containing those charges was “difficult to write” as Butch Otter was “a friend of [theirs] for many years.”

The point is, the PAC explains, not what Otter was, but what he is. “The governor that we have today is not the same man who stood up against Big Government, who stood up against the Federal government. We’re not sure when the change occurred, or why it occurred or when. It does not matter. But it is up to us to recognize that something has happened, and it affects our vote.”

Otter’s 40 years in elective office is long enough, the group adds, and calls on Idahoans to “consider fresh, Republican conservative leadership.”

Judging from the substantial quotes published on the PAC’s Facebook page, it appears they believe State Senator Russ Fulcher represents the GOP’s hope for a governor who will remain true to conservative principles.

As of press time, with 871 of 942 precincts reporting, Governor Otter leads Fulcher by a margin of nearly nine percentage points. The *Idaho Statesman* has called the race for Otter, quoting a political science professor who said, “The Idaho GOP establishment seems to be the big winner.”

The newspaper reports that other key GOP incumbents retained their seats, with Idaho’s Republicans apparently “satisfied with the status quo.”

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