

Team 17

[Sen. Elliot Werk](#)

[Rep. Sue Chew](#)

[Rep. John Gannon](#)

Public Forums

Please join us for our final public forum on April 9th from 7-9pm in the Grace Jordan Elementary School Library.

Please join us at Grace Jordan Elementary School tonight from 7-9pm for our final public forum of the legislative session! We'd love to speak to you about our experiences, hear your questions/concerns, and receive your feedback. We hope to see you there!

Dear Central,

Thank you for the honor to represent you in the Idaho Legislature. I've invited and include our District 17 House members in this legislative letter so that you're fully informed about what the District 17 legislators have accomplished this session. Together I, and Representatives Sue Chew and John Gannon, have developed a close collaboration that strengthens your legislative voice.

We focus on three key values:

- Fairness and integrity as we stand up for the middle class
- Shared responsibility as we work to improve your quality of life
- Shared accountability as we work for efficient and effective critical service delivery

The 2013 session focused on responding to the federal healthcare law, tax policy, voting rights and access issues, 2nd Amendment rights, and education proposals that were made despite being soundly defeated by voters last November. Unfortunately not enough effort was spent on strategies for job creation and economic growth, which we believe, in part, requires strong support for education. Continued high unemployment, low wages and revenue shortfalls at the state level remain because of poor decisions and a lack of economic vision over the last few decades.

Healthcare: After a long debate a state health insurance exchange required by The Patient Protection and

Affordable Care Act (PPACA) was approved ([H248](#)). The competing positions can be summed up as stop a state-based exchange and defeat Obamacare, or adopt a state-based exchange to ensure that Idaho citizens have place at the table. We sided with a state-based exchange since PPACA is the law of the land and a vote against a state-based exchange would be a vote for an imposed federal exchange. Rep. Gannon particularly supported it because his language requiring the exchange to hire Idahoans was included in the final bill. The exchange will have a local call center that will possibly employ hundreds of Idahoans. Generally we supported a state-based exchange as the best way to serve and protect consumers.

Unfortunately, voluntary expansion of Medicaid services was discussed but not approved. Data indicates that expansion will save Idaho taxpayers about \$120 million over the next 18 months while insuring an additional 110,000 people. Representative Chew worked tirelessly to pass Medicaid expansion this year (\$40 million savings). We'll more fully discuss this in the 2014 legislative session.

Taxes: A 2008 compromise suggested by Democrats that eliminates the business equipment tax for 90% of business at an annual cost of around \$20 million was essentially implemented this year ([H315](#)). Big business lobbyists wanted a full repeal ([H276](#)) at an annual cost of \$140 million (about \$100 million for the top 8 businesses in Idaho) that would've devastated local governments and school districts, and caused yet another shift of business taxes to individual property owners. Sen. Werk and Rep. Chew supported H276 while Rep. Gannon opposed because he believed the funding is needed for public schools.

Your Right to Vote: Idaho Democrats honor the will of the people. To this end Sen. Werk proposed several bills to enhance voting rights. The Voting Opportunity and Trustworthy Elections (VOTE) initiative included motor voter ([H60](#)), online registration, and improvements in early and same day voting ([H63](#)) as well as banning taxpayer funds for private elections ([H59](#)). Minor improvements in same day voting were enacted in a revised bill brought by the secretary of state. One or two others will be considered

next year.

After the people spoke loudly on the Luna propositions (Props. 1, 2 and 3) the majority party passed restrictions on access to the ballot for the initiative and referendum processes ([S1108](#)). Each of us spoke loudly and forcefully against this violation of your constitutional right to petition your government. Sen. Werk and Rep. Gannon (along with others) formally asked the governor to veto the bill to no avail. We hope that this law is overturned in court (as was a similar law in 2003).

2nd Amendment Rights: We will continue to protect and defend your 2nd Amendment rights. Concern was high regarding potential federal legislation and a number of measures were proposed and passed in the state legislature. We supported these efforts when they did not conflict with the United States Constitution.

Education/Proposition 1 Returns: The Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) brought back parts of the Proposition 1 despite the rebuke they received at the polls last November. Their proposals broke the proposition into several bills and all three of your legislators honored the will of the people and resisted these efforts.

In addition, funding was shifted from traditional schools to provide facility funds for charter schools ([H206a](#)). Though we agree that charter schools need facilities we didn't support this shift. Traditional schools must go to the voters for facilities funding and charter schools should be held to the same high standard. In addition, traditional schools are struggling and taking more money from their coffers will only make the problem worse.

Economy and Jobs: Idaho's economy has been struggling under a state economic policy that relies heavily on tax cuts. After 45 tax cuts in the last 20 years, recent data shows the extent of the economic catastrophe of this policy: Idaho is highest in the nation in minimum wage jobs and lowest in both personal income and investment in public school students. We must do better.

Idaho's unemployment and underemployment rates

remain unacceptably high. Despite strong support from the business community, one of our former IJOBS bills ([H51](#) - an incentive for value added agricultural processing) was defeated. Legislation to create a fund to help Idaho attract business under certain circumstances was supported by each of us ([H100](#)).

Budget: Critical services remain on life support and priorities remain askew. Prisons received a 7.2% increase while schools got only a 2.2% increase. The continued underfunding of public schools resulted in passage of 36 more property tax measures on March 12 – running the total to 90 of 115 districts that now rely on local property taxes to keep their doors open (some open only four days a week). We recognize that real economic development comes from long-term investment in education. There are no shortcuts.

Higher Education: Economic data confirms that investing in higher education is the most efficient way to provide rewarding career opportunities and move Idaho's economy into the 21st century. This year we're thankful for a small (4.4% overall, 2.4% general fund) increase in the higher education budget. Higher education, a driver of our economy, was cut 26% between 2008 and 2011. We're recovering (too) slowly from this retreat in economic investment.

Team Efforts: Together the team helped develop and co-sponsor the VOTE Initiative bills (Sen. Werk authored four of the bills). Rep. Chew focused on health and safety with [H16](#) (prescription drug tracking program), [H17](#) (regulates out-of-state pharmacies), [H239](#) (makes compounding pharmaceuticals safer), and HCR34 will help Idahoans deal with Alzheimer's. Rep. Gannon successfully passed the first pay increase for jurors since the 1960's ([H153](#)), tried to require more transparency of for-profit colleges ([H294](#)), and began his effort to stop the constant stream of robo-calls. Sen. Werk worked with the counties on a response to the Dynamis debacle but ran out of time ([S1159](#)). He also co-sponsored a number of pieces of legislation including restrictions on drones ([S1134](#)), reform of our beer laws ([S1058](#)), and a bill to protect vulnerable adults from unethical guardians ([H125](#)).

Again, it's an honor to represent you in the Idaho legislature. We appreciate all of the visits to our weekly office hours, the attendance at our four public forums, and the thousands of phone calls, emails, and letters. This input helped us to better represent you and our community. For all of this we're grateful.

Please contact any of us at any time at team17@mindspring.com, or by phone at 658-0388 (Sen. Werk) or 344-0098 (Rep. Chew) or 343-1608 (Rep. Gannon). We'll be hard at work between legislative sessions and welcome your help and counsel.

Thank you,

Team 17

Paid for by Werk for Senate, Susan Eastlake, Treasurer
Paid for by Sue Chew for Idaho, Mike Li, Treasurer
Paid for by Gannon for Rep. 17A, Dawn King, Treasurer

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As a resident of Boise's District 17 you're on this list so that Team 17 can effectively communicate with you about issues that are important to you and to your family. We're always open to suggestions for future newsletter topics. Thank you for joining us.

Our mailing address is:

Team 17
PO Box 9634
Boise, ID 83707

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Vision:

Our vision is to promote safety and involvement in our community while celebrating diversity in the Central Bench neighborhood.

Mission:

We will accomplish our vision through sustainable community planning in collaboration with Boise City's Neighborhood Reinvestment Program and Comprehensive Plan encouraging all residents, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to be active members in the process.

Central Bench Neighborhood Association Board

**Randy Harkelroade, President - Anna Alton, Vice-President - Molly Cochell, Secretary
Dick Anderson, Treasurer - Shari Hennefer, Director - Bryan DuFosse, Director
-Bev Pederson, Director - Susan Lowman-Thomas, Director**