



# 2020 CANDIDATE SURVEY

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CANDIDATE NAME: **BEN D. ADAMS**

OFFICE SOUGHT: **HOUSE 13B**

PARTY: **REPUBLICAN**

**Q1. The K-12 Education budget is the state's largest by far, yet some people still believe that we are not spending enough. What would you do to help Idaho's K-12 students receive a stellar education?**

My approach to Education is that it should prepare our students for life after school, and therefore I would advocate to reintroduce trades and civics into Idaho schools, while pushing the allocation of funds down to individual school districts, where the parents, teachers, and counselors who work with our children can see more clearly where the funds should be directed. I don't believe that underfunding is the problem within our schools, but rather the red tape that keeps funds from being used most effectively.

**Q2. Graduation rates at Idaho's four-year universities are stagnant while tuition continues to increase (with the exception of the one-year tuition freeze). What would you do to bring down the cost of higher education and help students graduate with less debt?**

Limiting the amount of incentive programs that funnel federal and state dollars into our universities will create a demand for our universities to lower tuition rates. If, for instance, a university knows that they will receive a specific dollar amount outside of general tuition for enrolling a student, they are more likely to take the student regardless of their likelihood to graduate. This causes a stagnant graduation rate and less incentive for individual focused education. If however, they are receiving minimal incentives for accepting students, the selection process will theoretically become more stringent and graduation rates will go up.

**Q3. Idaho has both an income tax and a sales tax, while five of our six neighbors have only one or the other. Idaho also has high property taxes. What changes do you suggest, if any, to Idaho's state tax structure?**

In order to lower taxes, the state government will need to eliminate unnecessary

or burdensome programs that create a drag on the state budget. I advocate for a tax system that creates the incentive to earn income. One that allows hard working Idahoans to keep their earned income. If we can move away from a State income tax, we can empower citizens to spend their money wisely. Idaho's property taxes have become a big issue in recent years, and I would advocate for lowering property taxes. Regarding impact fees, I would like to see if data shows more Idahoans buying new homes or if new residents moving into the State are building the new houses. The concept of having growth pay for growth is good, but we want to ensure that we are not passing the cost of growth onto everyday Idahoans through increased impact fees. We should also incentivize larger businesses to move into the State by adopting low tax and regulatory policies that make Idaho attractive for all businesses, alleviating the tax burden on every day Idahoans.

**Q4. The grocery sales tax has long been debated in Idaho. Should Idaho repeal the tax on groceries? If yes, when?**

The grocery tax has been a source of revenue for the state from out of state visitors, bringing in millions of dollars in revenue. Ensuring that a balance is struck between maintaining a balanced budget and repealing taxes, we should first look to repeal all grocery taxes connected to the healthy food pyramid, while maintaining the 6% tax on luxury foods, which are more likely to be bought by tourists. Candy, soda, and other non-essential foods should be the bridge as we move towards a full repeal of the grocery tax.

**Q5. Urban renewal districts receive all the increases in property tax revenue within their borders, which forces other property owners to fund increased service requirements. Should Idaho end urban renewal? If not, should state lawmakers change urban renewal law?**

Idaho should end urban renewal. The concept sounds good on the surface, but in Nampa for instance, we have seen urban renewal projects that do not become solvent and become a drag on private growth and property owners. I.E. Nampa library parking garage.

**Q6. Healthcare is a significant expense in Idaho's state budget, rivaling education in total appropriations. How would you tackle ever-increasing state Medicaid costs? More broadly, what ideas do you propose to help make quality healthcare more affordable for all?**

The private sector of the healthcare industry has the capacity to lower costs through competition, while state run healthcare creates an ever increasing demand for more public funds. I would be in support of repealing Medicaid expansion if it is shown to not be within the States' budget to fund. As with many industries, ensuring a competitive market within healthcare will require government oversight, however its scope should be limited, and control of the industry should always be vested in the private sector.

**Q7. Criminal justice reform has become a bipartisan issue in recent years. Should Idaho explore further reforms? If so, which reforms would you support?**

Yes, Idaho should absolutely look for ways to reform our criminal justice system. We should make it easier for reformed citizens to get to job interviews by removing the "Felon" box on applications that are not related to public safety or positions that work with children/patients.

**Q8. In 2020, Idaho saw some reduction in occupational licensing mandates. Should Idaho continue to identify and implement alternatives to licensure burdens? If yes, which licenses should be reviewed or repealed?**

Yes. Any licensing process that puts needless burdens on those trying to work should be reviewed and if possible, repealed.

**Q9. Federal dollars always come with strings, yet a significant portion of Idaho's annual state budget is funded with federal money. Should Idaho work to reduce its dependence on federal funding? If yes, how?**

Yes, Idaho should absolutely work to reduce dependence on federal funds. By reclaiming Idaho's lands from federal control, rejecting federally mandated medical programs, and reforming Idaho's education into a system centered in the community rather than on federal incentives and mandates.

**Q10. Education choice allows parents and students to choose the education that best suits their needs. What policies would you support to strengthen education choice in Idaho?**

The State constitution requires the legislature to establish and maintain a general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools. This does not address the large community of home school and privately ran education centers in Idaho, and I would oppose sending tax dollars via incentives. I believe that all tax revenue should be meticulously tracked to ensure faith and confidence in the State government. If state funds were allocated to home school and private institutions, there would be strings attached to ensure the same requirements on public schools would be applied to them. Therefore, In order to maintain the free and open standards for home school education in Idaho, I would oppose any form of voucher system. I am in favor of a universal tax credit for those who choose to educate their children outside of the public school system.

**Q11. What is the proper role of state government?**

Government is an instrument of force. Unless we can, in clear conscience, deprive a citizen of life, imprison them, or forcibly deprive them of their property for failing to obey a given law, we should oppose that law. The smallest or lowest level that can

possibly undertake the task is the one that should do so, and therefore the role of State government should be to ensure the rights of its citizens first and foremost. These rights are given by God rather than by men, because what man gives can be taken away, but what God gives cannot be taken away. The State should enact laws in conscience and judgement that are assured to secure the public interest. When government at any level takes an aggressive role in the redistribution of wealth to provide "benefits" to some of its citizens, it no longer is protecting its citizens, but rather becomes a system of legalized plunder. The law should not abolish or restrain, but rather preserve and enlarge freedom.