



2020 CANDIDATE SURVEY

CANDIDATE NAME: **KIRK ADAMS**

OFFICE SOUGHT: **HOUSE 11B**

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?

All students need to read by 3rd grade; from there, they will read to learn. Learning is different for each student. A one size fits all models will not work. We have to be flexible to the local needs of families and communities. A state or federal model that is not flexible fails to meet the needs of each local school district. Students need choice but our public schools need the funds to educate all students. The vulnerable students need to be protected. The success of education is not measured on dollars in a budget it is measured by the productivity of our youth. If a "go on" rate does not include students that enlist in the military or take the time to serve their church on a mission then what are we really measuring? The best way to help Idaho's K-12 students is to support the development of local districts with guidelines not mandates. We need to develop an Idaho standard that has local control. Supplementing school budgets with local property taxes has made villains out of school districts. The funding model for rural vs. urban schools needs to be completed.

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?

Idaho students can graduate high school with two years of college credit. With four years of military service you can earn four years of college scholarship, five years for STEM degrees. The path forward involves personal responsibility. It requires a budget to understand what the return is on college tuition. Often, school loans are taken out without any thought of return on investment and now there is a national push to forgive them. The cost of tuition has many factors but going to college is not a "need to" it is a "want to" by too many students who do not have a financial plan.

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?

Idaho taxing structure is not comprehensive. State income tax and sales tax are not currently paying for growth. That gap has been left to local taxing districts. If the state forces unfunded mandates to local taxing districts who are under no obligation to be fiscally conservative then local cities and counties have no incentive to reduce their taxing power. Growth is not paying for growth. The solution will come from a comprehensive tax plan that includes all stakeholders. The blame game has to stop, the taxpayers are tired of this lack of leadership. Taxes need to be reduced not shifted to another party.

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

The grocery tax is another part to the failing Idaho tax structure. It needs to be included in our comprehensive tax plan. If we choose to repeal it, then we leave money on the table from every visitor and tourist who comes to our state. If we leave it on, we hurt low income wage earners who have to wait for the tax credit till the end of the year. The decision to repeal any tax should not be made in a vacuum or it creates a tax shift. We need the grocery tax to be included in the property tax, income tax and sales tax discussion.

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?

Urban renewal should be a local issue left to local control.

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 current voter approved, Medicaid Expansion will give us the data we need to make a well-educated decision in the future. We will be able to measure costs shifting from our counties to the state and federal budget. With two more years of information we can work to make changes that provide healthcare where it is needed. We need to make sure we have open healthcare markets and limited regulation so patients have choice and security.

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

We need to address our recidivism problem. Once done, it will help fix a significant portion of our criminal justice issues. We need a program that gives people a chance to return successfully to society. Without training and support the “in and out of prison” merry-go-round will continue at the expense of tax payers and families. We have to incarcerate truly bad criminals but give opportunity for success to good people who make bad choices. In addition, we need to continue to explore fundamental changes when dealing with treatment for addiction. The criminal justice system is the most expensive and least successful program we have for addicts. We need to follow science and help develop successful programs that allow for treatment not incarceration.

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?

Occupational licensing should only be in place if there are actual protections needed for services offered. Regulations for the purpose of revenue generation only should be abolished. If service providers feel there are burdens within a certain industry then that industry should be empowered to bring those ideas to the legislature.

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?

Idaho has done a good job of balancing the requirements that come with federal monies. Idaho is a state that has worked hard to fight and maintain our liberties that have come under duress at times from the federal government. Our Governor, State Attorney General and Legislature have worked together with our US Representatives and Senators to maintain that relationship.

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?

I support the current educational choice system that is in place.

Q11. What is the proper role of state government?

The proper role of government was established by our Constitution. It created our government, consisting of three branches: legislative, executive and judicial. It also created a system of checks and balances between the three branches. Additionally, it divides the power between the federal government and the states. Ultimately, it limits the power of government to protect the liberty and rights of the citizens from government abuse.

Our representative democracy has limited the power of government both at the state

and federal level while allowing its people and companies to thrive under a stable government. Our pursuit of happiness is still controlled by our work ethic and desire to seek gains from innovation and ingenuity. The American Dream is alive and well.