

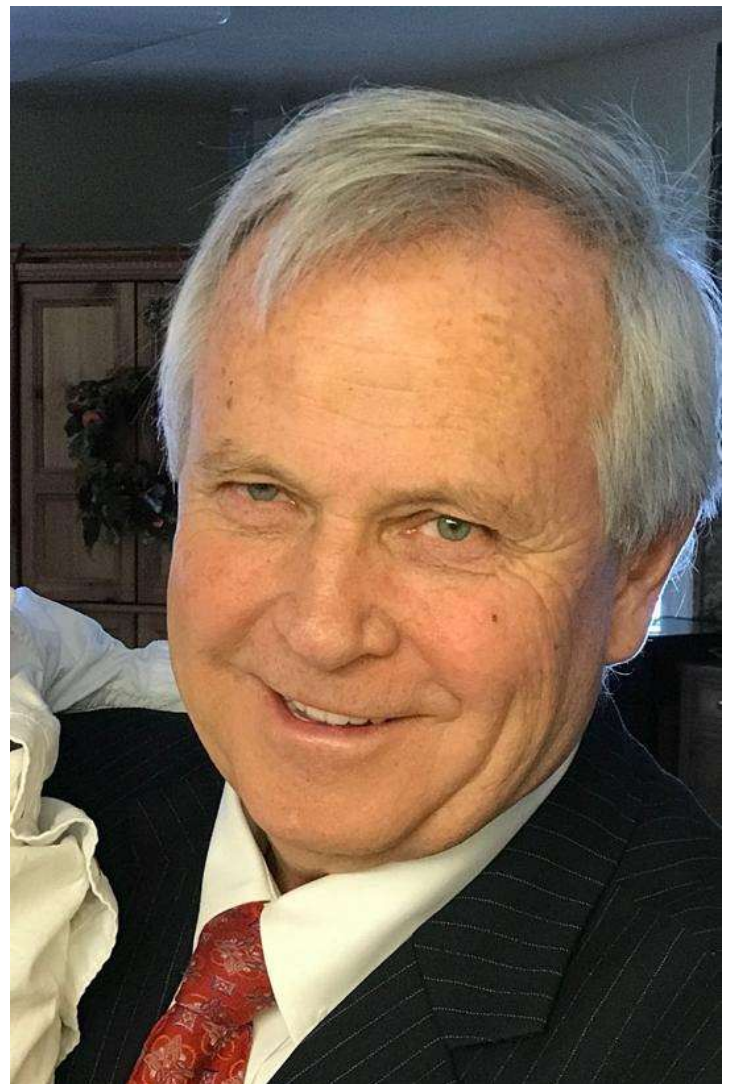
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Opinion: Obtaining conservative government our state, nation must have

Jun 1, 2022

Over the next several months, I believe Idahoans will come to celebrate the outcome of the Republican primary. That's not an easy thing to say, as many of my friends lost their election contests. But overall, conservatives are much better off than they've ever been.

Starting with statewide offices, note that instead of having a conservative lieutenant governor, who has no real power to speak of, we will instead have a conservative attorney general. I suspect that the effects of this will be felt instantly, as Raul Labrador begins challenging federal encroachment into Idaho's public policies. I also suspect that, if the education initiative that proposes nearly doubling the state's income tax for top earners passes, Labrador would do what the current attorney general did not do and question the constitutionality of a tax increase that is supposed to be left to the Legislature to determine.



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But the biggest benefit to the Republican primary comes from the changes to the state Senate. Today's state Senate is filled with Republicans but very few conservative champions. At most, there are three conservative senators, and each of them is retiring. The 2023 class of Idaho senators could include as many as 15 conservatives. No longer will the Senate be the place where conservative legislation from the House goes to die.

And speaking of the Idaho House, while we lost a handful of conservative representatives, a nearly like number of conservative candidates fill the ranks of the body, leaving it virtually unchanged.

I think this is going to lead to a change of direction for Idaho lawmaking. I can imagine a Legislature that more aggressively votes to cut taxes, including the elimination of the grocery tax, and possibly looks to rid the state entirely of the income tax. I can imagine a state Legislature that finally works to get property taxes under control.

It's also quite likely that the Legislature takes seriously the threat being posed by the Idaho teachers' unions and does something to restrain their power instead of allowing them to control our school boards and, by extension, our public schools. That would also mean an end to critical race theory, culturally responsive teaching and social-emotional learning that have now taken root in our education system. It could mean an end to the social justice system that has metastasized into our public colleges and universities.

I also imagine that the Legislature might finally start to take a serious look at state agency budgets, especially Medicaid, which is now the single biggest state program, easily eclipsing the public school system. It's a well-known fact that half the babies born in our state are enrolled in government welfare programs. This and corporate cronyism is not good for the long-term health and vitality of any state or community.

Finally, let's imagine a state Legislature that passes checks and balances necessary to keep a public health issue from being used as an excuse to shut down the state's economy. Passing such a reform has been a virtual impossibility over the last two years.

The new Legislature should have the votes to get this important work done.

The objective of the election was not to just be a loud voice sending out press releases critical of the Biden administration and the other leftists in Washington, D.C. That accomplishes very little. The real objective is to have a state government that is prepared to do something about it by promoting conservative policies in Idaho's statehouse. By that measure, we got exactly what we were looking for, a conservative government that Idaho — and America — badly needs.

Doyle Beck is the Bonneville County Republican Party's state committeeman.