

# Reader

ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, BLUSTER AND SOME NEWS

APRIL 25, 2024 **FREE** VOL. 21 ISSUE 17



**Candidate  
Questionnaire  
in this edition**





# CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

## 2024 PRIMARY ELECTION

Races for Idaho Legislature Dist. 1 Senate, House 1A and House 1B  
Compiled by Zach Hagadone and Ben Olson

Publisher's note: Before each election, the *Sandpoint Reader* reaches out to candidates in contested races to ask questions about how they would represent the constituents in the offices they seek. Below are questions and answers for the offices of Idaho Legislative District 1A and 1B House, as well as District 1 Idaho Senate, in the Tuesday, May 21 primary election. A questionnaire featuring candidates for Bonner County office published April 18 and can be found at [sandpointreader.com](http://sandpointreader.com).

All candidates who responded to our questions have been included below, with some answers edited lightly for length.

There are two candidates forums coming up: the first featuring Bonner County candidates on Monday, April 29 hosted by the *Bonner County Daily Bee* and Selkirk Association of Realtors; the other featuring Idaho Legislative District 1 candidates on Tuesday, April 30 and hosted by KRFY 88.5FM, SandpointOnline.com and the *Sandpoint Reader*.

Both forums will be held at the Sandpoint High School auditorium and will begin at 5:30 p.m. and conclude no later than 8 p.m.

Finally, don't forget to vote Tuesday, May 21.

### District 1 Idaho Senate

1. Why are you running for District 1 Senate?
2. What do you think are the three most important issues to your constituents?
3. What do you see as the top challenge facing District 1, and how do you propose to address it?
4. What differentiates you from the other candidates for the District 1 Senate seat?
5. What piece of legislation signed into law from the 2024 Legislature did the most good for Idahoans, and what piece of legislation did the most harm to Idahoans?

#### Scott Herndon, R (incumbent)



Age: 56

Birthplace and residence:

Born in Richmond, Va., resides in Sagle, Idaho

How many years lived in Bonner County: 20

Past/current government service (if applicable): Current state senator for District 1; previously worked as a software contractor for public schools and two public universities

Profession: Custom home-builder in Bonner and Boundary counties

Education: B.S., finance, Arizona State University

Contact info: [scott@hernndonforidaho.com](mailto:scott@hernndonforidaho.com); cell 208-610-2680

1. The Institute for Legislative Analysis concluded that before I was elected in 2022, Idaho's legislative Republicans ranked 41st out of 50 states for how conservative they were. During my predecessor's time, Idaho's government spending grew 43% in just four years. Idaho was not leading in conservative protections for families and children. Instead, it was growing dependence on government welfare. In my two years, we have started to turn that around. We have reformed the budget process, controlled spending and have added protections

for families and children. I want to continue that conservative momentum.

2. a. Inflation and the growth of government spending, dependence and welfare programs.  
b. Illegal immigration and our inability to control criminals infiltrating the border.  
c. Protection of our children. Our children are increasingly being assaulted by aggressive sexual and cultural messages that are undermining the traditional family and interrupting success in academic outcomes.

3. The cost of government has helped staggering inflation. The dollar is losing its value at an incredible rate and the federal government adds \$1 trillion in debt on average every 120 days. This harms fixed income Idahoans the most.

Unless we control government spending, we will have a tremendous economic imbalance in North Idaho, and we will have persistent labor shortages with not enough young people being able to afford to live and work here.

4. I am a fiscal conservative. My opponent voted for every one of hundreds of spending bills while I had the courage to say no to some. This led to amazing spending reforms in the Idaho Legislature this year. We achieved line-item budgets and were able to decrease total government spending year over year. Several rating agencies have rated our voting records. I have an average 95% conservative rating based on how I have voted on hundreds of bills, whereas my opponent is below 50%. Finally, in contrast to my opponent, I have

succeeded in strengthening Idaho's laws against illegal immigration.

5. House Bill 521 was the most significant legislation. It cut income taxes by over \$60 million. It also eliminated the August election date and banned diversity statements as a condition of hiring in public education. H521 created a \$1 billion bond funding mechanism for public school facilities, which will relieve the burden on property taxpayers while maintaining a fiscally sound Idaho balance sheet.

House Bill 685 will harm Idaho's budget the most by not seeking to reign in out-of-control Medicaid costs. Medicaid is 35% of total government spending in Idaho and has grown from \$2 billion in just 10 years.

## Jim Woodward, R



Age: 53

Birthplace and residence: Birthplace: Anacortes, Wash., residence: Sagle, Idaho

How many years lived in Bonner County: 28 years; 16 years in Boundary County

Past/current government service (if applicable): 21 years of Navy service in submarines, coastal warfare and physical security; Legislative District 1 state senator for four years; Sagle Fire District commissioner for seven years; Northern Lights board member for 10 years

Profession: Excavation and marine contractor

Education: B.S., mechanical engineering, University of Idaho

Contact info: jim@woodwardforse-nate.org, cell 208-946-7963

1. I would like to keep Idaho IDAHO. I think most everyone is here for similar reasons, whether new to the area or from a multi-generational Idaho family. We enjoy our independence but with responsibility for our actions. We want small government that is fiscally conservative. We live and let live. We believe that the best decisions are those made closest to home. I advocate for states' rights in our federalist system and local decision making by locally elected officials within the state.

2. a. Education — We have a constitutional obligation to our state education system. Let's raise and educate our youth so they can fend for themselves and continue on with our great state and country.

b. Health care — We are running our doctors out of Idaho. I do not believe in abortion as birth control, but I do believe in medical decisions by medical professionals to protect the physical health of a woman.

c. Property taxes — We can reduce property taxes and move away from the "every two year school levy battle" by fully funding our schools at the state level.

3. I think growth is still the top challenge in Legislative District 1 and

in Idaho. Through state and local government, we have to maintain and update our infrastructure to maintain our quality of life. Aside from government functions, I think we all have to work together to maintain the Idaho lifestyle we've come to know. Times change, but we can hold on to our values and our community.

4. When I went to War Memorial Field, I took my construction crew and equipment. We demolished the old bleachers and locker room as a volunteer project to make way for new facilities.

When Herndon went to War Memorial Field, he instigated a lawsuit against the Festival at Sandpoint which is essentially a lawsuit against the community. He cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars in a years-long court battle. We are vying for a position representing the community, yet he fights the community. I am vested in North Idaho and our communities through friends, family, place and business.

5. Most good: I believe the school facilities funding bill (H521) is significant progress for both school funding

and property tax relief. It is a major paradigm shift for the state of Idaho to provide facilities funding as compared to funding school buildings with property taxes.

Most harm: The library bill (H710) is just one more example of an out-of-state solution to an out-of-state problem. None of us want our children viewing inappropriate material. That is why we have locally elected library boards, which have established review processes and a procedure for patrons to challenge library materials.

## District 1 House Seat A

1. Why are you running for District 1A House?

2. What do you think are the three most important issues to your constituents?

3. What do you see as the top challenge facing District 1 and how do you propose to address it?

4. What differentiates you from the other candidates for the District 1A seat?

5. The Idaho Legislature has focused a lot of its attention on the introduction of bills that don't have widespread voter support, such as Senate Bill 1280, which would allow patrons to sue the library for "harmful materials." Are these types of bills useful for the Legislature to spend its time on? Why or why not?

## Spencer Hutchings, R



Age: 55

Birthplace and residence: Calif., Sagle

How many years lived in Bonner Co.: 11

Past/current government service (if applicable): proud and loyal U.S. citizen

Profession: business owner

Education: one year of college

Contact info: spencer@hutchings4idaho.com

1. We got stuck with a person last election that got about 38% of the vote. This person clearly does not reflect the beliefs and values of the majority of citizens in North Idaho. The citizens of North Idaho should have a representative, like me, that reflects and will fight for the values and beliefs of the North Idaho community.

2. a. Put parents in charge of their children's education: tax dollars should follow the student. Parents should be able to choose any school that they feel

suits their children's needs.

b. Reducing the size of government: There is no such thing as a tax cut without a reduction in the size of government. Cut taxes, cut staff, cut departments... keep doing that until we reach the minimum necessary government to provide the services we need.

c. Stopping the influx of cheap labor. Idahoans will struggle to earn good wages as long as our state is flooded with cheap, foreign labor.

3. The average income (\$50,000) family is struggling to afford living here. How do you address it? Well that is the big question. As near as I can tell there is not one answer that has been suggested to solve this issue. I'm open to input and ideas from all sides to try and solve this issue for the citizens of North Idaho.

4. I understand the concept of "Public Service." I am forthright and honest in my statements and actions. I seek to make life better for all the citizens of North Idaho, not select groups.

5. It's a quandary. When you get small vocal groups applying pressure to malleable politicians pushing for a goal that is important to just their group, you often end up with laws that have strange and often undesirable outcomes for the majority. H.B. 710 is conservative representatives' attempt to make the libraries of our state a safe place for young kids to explore

and read without accidentally running across a book about sex. It's fine with me that they are working on this. It could be far worse; they could fight for days about the name of a building.

## Jane Sauter, R



Age: DID NOT RESPOND

Birthplace and residence: Austin, Minn.; resides in Cocolalla, Idaho

How many years lived in Bonner County: Eight

Past/current government service (if applicable): Poll worker, as well as a chief election judge in several Bonner County elections; delegate to the Republican State Convention in 2020; Kelso Republican precinct committeeman, 2020-2022; helped in the campaigns of several local Republican candidates

Profession: Wife, mother, grandmother, homemaker, small business co-owner

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< Q&A, Con't from Page 15 >

Answers con't from Jane Sauter

*Education:* High school diploma, Austin Christian Academy, Austin, Minn.; A.A., theology, Christ For the Nations Institute, Dallas

*Contact info:* janesauterforidaho.com/contact-me

1. I am running in District 1 for state representative to replace Mark Sauter, because he does not represent liberty loving constitutional conservatives. My other opponent has a track record of being disruptive in public.

2. The three most important issues to my constituents are most-likely:

- a. The safety and well-being of the children and families of Idaho;
- b. Our First and Second Amendment rights;
- c. Border security and illegal migration.

3. I see the top challenge to District 1 being the ineffective leadership of elected officials running as Republicans when they vote with the Democrats a majority of the time.

4. Unlike Mark [Sauter], I will stand up for Republican values and interests. I will use the Republican platform as a guide, as well as the Idaho State Constitution and the United States Constitution. As far as my other opponent is concerned, I am assertive, not aggressive, and I know how to work well with others to get things done.

5. I would say that H.B. 710 was a very important bill. The educational materials made available to children is of great importance. Our children are a treasure of inestimable value, and quality reading material is of utmost importance in their formative years.

**Candidate forums will be held Monday, April 29 (Bonner Co.) and Tuesday, April 30 (District 1 legislature) at the Sandpoint High School auditorium, starting at 5:30 p.m. both nights.**

**Mark Sauter, R (incumbent)**



*Age:* 66

*Birthplace and residence:*

Born in Downey, Calif.; resides in Sandpoint, Idaho

*How many years lived in*

*Bonner County:* Owned property in Sagle since 1993, moved to Sandpoint in 2012.

*Past/current government service (if applicable):* past president of Bonner County Fire Chief Association, current Idaho Legislative District 1A representative

*Profession:* Worked and volunteered for Selkirk Fire for five years since being in Sandpoint, firefighter through fire chief covering 30 years, another three years in city administration after fire service work

*Education:* Undergrad degree in fire administration, graduate degree in public administration

*Contact info:* Mark@mark-sauterforidaho.com

1. I'm running for reelection because there is work to do for our district. We need to continue to support our community. Serving my community is what I have done all my adult life. I have finished my second legislative session and understand how the governing process works. I have results to show for my efforts. This year I ran five bills to address real issues we have in our district. All of these Bills (H.B. 571, H.B. 592, H.B. 645, H.B. 687, S.B.1244) were passed by the Legislature and then signed by the governor.

2. Education, infrastructure and public safety immediately come to mind. We need to add community health and housing, too. For our area to continue being a place to raise

our families, conduct business and enjoy our beautiful surroundings, we must support these pillars of the district. These issues are intertwined. We need jobs, a good education system and a health care system to handle our everyday needs. Because our area is so attractive, we must deal with the influx of new residents, and affordable housing as well.

3. No. 1 is balance. Funding for education and facilities is important, as is controlling our tax burden. I've supported property and income tax relief to address some of these concerns. I've also supported legislation to send tax dollars to our schools for facility improvements and reduce the burden of levies and bonds. We have unfilled jobs but lack the skilled workforce to fill them. Career technical educa-

tion has been a focus of mine. Preparing students for better-paying jobs helps fill our needs, provides students with a better job pathway, dulls the immediate need for housing and keeps our kids here.

4. I have been active in our community since 2012 and served our district for two legislative sessions. During that time, I have built many relationships with community and business leaders. This knowledge and these relationships put me in a position to better represent the interests of our district and to address the needs of our entire constituency through legislation. There is work to be done to continue to improve our state governance. Along with a 30-year-plus career in community service, I have proven I can represent our district and have

successfully navigated through the legislative process.

5. Some bills are presented to the Legislature by special interest groups, sometimes called purity tests. They can be solutions looking for a problem. Other bills address a need somewhere in the state. Many times, the bill has already been addressed by local, responsible (elected) parties. Each bill needs to be evaluated and considered locally to determine if it deserves a "pass." I have voted against the library bills because we already have local systems and elected officials in place, don't agree with the penalty and costs, and don't think county prosecutors and the attorney general should be involved with enforcement.

**District 1 House Seat B**

**1. Why are you running for District 1B House?**

**2. What do you think are the three most important issues to your constituents?**

**3. What do you see as the top challenge facing District 1, and how do you propose to address it?**

**4. What differentiates you from the other candidates for the District 1B seat?**

**5. What piece of legislation signed into law from the 2024 Legislature did the most good for Idahoans, and what piece of legislation did the most harm to Idahoans?**

**Kathryn Larson, D**



*Age:* 66

*Birthplace and residence:*

Born in Dallas, moved 11 times before high school, raised children in Colorado, resides in Bonner County

*How many years lived in Bonner County:* Nine

*Past/current government service (if applicable):* N/A

*Profession:* Consultant helping organizations function more effectively, focusing on strategy, decision making, risk and understanding tradeoffs

*Education:* B.S., geology; post-graduate work in education and organizational development

*Contact info:* kathrynlarsonforidaho@gmail.com

1. The people of North Idaho deserve to be represented. Our government works best when there is a balance of power. The Republican Party has had a supermajority for 37 years and that power has

corrupted the leadership to stop representing the citizens of North Idaho and instead serve the interests of party leadership. It's time for a course correction. It's time for the pendulum to swing back. We need elected officials who listen to their constituents, engage in genuine problem solving, and are willing to be held accountable.

2. Three filters help identify the issues: Does it impact our quality of life? Does it chip away at our freedom? Will it impact the economic health of local businesses and working-class families?

District 1 issues are:

- a. Women's health care —

< see Q&A, Page 17 >



< Q&A, Con't from Page 16 >

specifically OB-GYN. Our rural health care system is in jeopardy.

b. Underfunded/under-supported public schools — Equip our young people for economic opportunities locally, after they leave high school.

c. Aging infrastructure stressed by growth — affordable housing; safe, navigable roads; and robust, sustainable sewer/water systems fall into that category.

We need collaborative problem solving across perspectives to address these problems.

3. Reverse the drain that the state puts on local city and county taxpayers. Since 1999 our local portion of the burden has gone from 25% to nearly 50%. A smaller group of people carries a larger burden. While they claim to be against big government, legislators distract and add costs with excess regulations on our schools, libraries and health care. The JFAC line item veto increases state power to starve agencies. The fix is to elect legislators who represent your interests — not special, out-of-state interests. Take their power away and we'll regain the power to tackle our challenges.

4. I believe in strong public education. Our children are our future. Our businesses and daily lives depend upon drivable roads, access to water and affordable housing. We need to support public infrastructure. Population growth has stressed that infrastructure. We need high-quality health care for men and women if we want to attract high quality employees. My opponents want vouchers that will bankrupt the schools. They'd like to privatize all public services. They don't value women's health care. It's a bright line.

5. LAUNCH is a good piece of legislation. It gives opportunity to our young people. The JFAC rule changes were the most harmful legislation because it gave sweeping power to the IFF to micromanage and cut funding deep into agencies. Legislators axed funds to feed hungry children and sent \$16.3 million of our tax dollars to feed children in other states. It's mean. It's shortsighted. Our community will have to pick up the slack. Business owners know that giving departments discretion over the details of their budgets with accountability delivers better outcomes. This sweeping rule change removes discretion and accountability.

## Bob Vickaryous, D

**DID NOT RESPOND**

## Charles "Chuck" Lowman, R



Age: 47

Birthplace and residence: Grand Junction, Colo.; resides in Sandpoint, Idaho

How many years lived in Bonner Co.: 5

Past/current government service (if applicable): U.S. Army officer (12 years), Idaho Department of Fish and Game (three years), Colorado Division of Wildlife (one year), Nevada Department of Wildlife (four years)

Profession: Small business owner

Education: B.S., wildlife resources, University of Idaho (1999); master of divinity, Multnomah University (2007)

Contact info: chuck@chucklowman.com, 208-946-5928

1. What our community needs is servant leadership: the kind of people who have proven that they can listen to their neighbor, understand the issue at hand and find workable solutions by bringing people together while not separating them with divisive politics. We need to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. We need to make friends with our opponent — not drag them into court. We need the kind of leaders who bring people to the table, not the kind who reject and despise their neighbor because we don't agree on how things should be done.

2. a. School funding and school choice;  
b. Fentanyl and other drugs making their way into our community;  
c. Community growth and development (workforce opportunities for young families, affordable Housing, education and protecting arable lands)

3. School funding for rural schools is the top issue facing our community. Rural schools across the state do not have the uniform educational experience as mandated by the Idaho Constitution. Our counties do not have the tax base to support infrastructure and operational needs, resulting in deferred facilities maintenance and high teacher turnover. H.B. 521 is a good start, but it does not adequately target school districts with the highest needs; those schools with the highest need should be addressed first. Once we stop the

bleeding, so-to-speak, then we can address other issues.

4. Leadership and experience. I've worked in eight U.S. states and nine countries around the world. I have worked in the trades and professional fields, at all levels. I was an Army officer with nearly 12 years of active duty experience, providing crucial leadership during 39 months of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. I have taken complex problems and ideas, translated those into workable solutions and delivered those solutions through targeted training to thousands of soldiers. I don't just talk about servant leadership, but I have committed to live that lifestyle in all that I do.

5. Good: Along with H.B. 521, another important bill was H.B. 399, which authorizes the Board of Medicine to collect and report data on maternal mortality rates. As we work through the issues related to restrictive abortion laws, it's imperative that we make decisions with full knowledge of the impacts to maternal mortality.

Bad: H.B. 704 seeks to continue deregulating electrical codes. This bill changed supervision requirements to a ratio of one journeyman to six apprentices, and supervision is only defined as the ability to talk to the supervisor (via cellphone). This increases risk related to electrical installations.

## Cornel Razor, R



Age: 67

Birthplace and residence: Jackson, Calif.; resides in Sagle, Idaho

How many years lived in Bonner County: 53 years in Bonner County, 1969-1978 and 1979-2024; one year in Tillamook County, 1978-1979.

Past/current government service (if applicable): Bonner County commissioner 2009-2012

Profession: Retail store owner

Education: Two years of college

Contact info: 501 Oak St., Sandpoint, Idaho 83864

1. The seat was vacated by Sage Dixon and I believe I could be an encouraging addition to the House as

a conservative working towards limited government.

2. Better management of the state budget with reductions in taxes, protection of life and education.

3. Property taxes and education funding. I will have something of a novel method for attacking this and since the legislative session is over, I will keep that information close to my vest at this time. Should I be elected, I will tackle it. Should I not be elected I will give the information to a trusted legislator to look into.

4. There is only one other Republican candidate at this point in the primary, but, including the two Democrat challengers, I believe the main difference is that I have government background and have worked for many years dealing with issues that concern people and methods of solving those issues. I believe I would bring a unique perspective to the Legislature for Bonner and Boundary County in that I understand the issues that county commissions face when dealing with state legislation that impacts the county.

5. DID NOT RESPOND.

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