Quote

“Our family of 7 loves PBS—the Newshour, Frontline, Nova, PBS Kids shows, etc. Thank you for providing good, educational content that is balanced and informative.” – Jonathan and Heidi

Resources to Help Voters Make Informed Choices

Americans have the right to vote. They also have the right not to vote.

In the 2020 primary election, the Idaho Secretary of State’s office reported that just over 17 percent of the population who qualified to vote actually did—not the lowest participation level but pretty close. That level was almost 66 percent in the 2020 general election. That was the highest since 1992 but it’s not typically not that high; the average rate of participation in elections is just over 54 percent.

A look at the data back to 1980 shows that voters tend not to show up for the primaries. But primary and general elections are both important parts of our democratic process and a way for voters to have their say in how our government operates. Voting is a duty that many people don’t exercise. Maybe that’s because people don’t fully understand the process and why it is so important.

To help more people understand elections—and to encourage involvement from those who have just become old enough to vote—we’ve put together some assets to help make easy work of this important civic duty. Our Civil Discourse website (idahoptv.org/civility) contains documentaries, educational resources, and information for teachers on media literacy.

There are also links to this primary season’s The Idaho Debates featuring candidates for statewide and congressional races. If you missed any of the debates, don’t worry: they’re all online for you to watch.

These resources are all part of our efforts to help you make informed decisions when you vote. Please exercise your right to vote in the primary election on May 17.

MAY 2–5, 2022

Idaho Public Television is participating in the Idaho Gives campaign. Idaho Gives is a weeklong online giving event that raises funds and awareness for Idaho nonprofits. Please visit https://www.idahogives.org and support the charitable causes you care about.
IdahoPTV Garnered 13 Emmy Nominations

The Northwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences recently announced its 2022 Northwest Regional Emmy Award nominations. We’re proud to report Idaho Public Television was nominated for 13 awards. Here are the honors for which our producers, filmmakers and station were nominated. Winners will be announced during a ceremony on Saturday, June 4, at Fremont Studios in Seattle.

Writer Craft Long Form
Bill Manny, Idaho Experience
Lauren Melink, Outdoor Idaho

Photographer Long Form
Jay Krajic

Graphic Arts
Cassandra Groll, Science Trek

Historical/Cultural Long Form
Idaho Experience “Idaho’s Hemmingway”

Health/Medical Long Form
Resilience: Hope Lives Here

Business/Consumer Long Form
Outdoor Idaho “Spud Country”

Informational/Instructional Long Form
Outdoor Idaho “Women Who Hunt”
Outdoor Idaho “Off the Beaten Path”

Documentary Topical
Idaho Experience “Caxton: An American Press”

Interview
Dialogue “Author Catherine Grace”

Children/Youth/Teens
Science Trek “Animal Adaptations”

Overall Excellence
Idaho Public Television

In the Community

IdahoPTV Hosted Leadership Boise Academy and Leadership Boise

On April 6, IdahoPTV hosted 45 students for Leadership Boise Academy at the station. Staff explained the work we do at IdahoPTV and led tour groups introducing them to studio productions, production control, and field productions. The students asked great questions. On April 13, we hosted the Leadership Boise group at the station.
Education Outreach

Join IdahoPTV’s education team as they participate in the following events:

**May 6** – Glenns Ferry Community Resource Bus from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Hammett (corner of Hwy 30 and Main Street) and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in King Hill (5381 E Main Street). Our education team will be the community partner on the bus providing STEM activities.

**May 18** – Outdoor Storytime with PBS KIDS Nature Cat at Meridian Library District. Nature Cat mascot costume will be at the outdoor storytime at the library with activities. Storytime starts at 5:30 p.m.

**May 19** – Family STEM Night at Caldwell Public Library. Spool Racer activity at 6 p.m.

**May 19** – Gardening Family Night in American Falls at 6 p.m. at the high school greenhouse.

**May 20** – Storytime with PBS KIDS Nature Cat at Glenns Ferry Public Library. Nature Cat mascot costume will be at storytime at the library with activities. Storytime starts at 1 p.m.

**May 20** – Outdoor Activities with PBS KIDS Nature Cat at Gooding Public Library. Nature Cat mascot costume will be at the library with activities. Activities start at 3:30 p.m.

**May 21** – Summer Learning and Reading Celebration at JUMP in Boise from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Boise Public Library is presenting this kick-off party in partnership with Idaho Public Television, Ada Community Library, Rediscovered Books, and Boise School District. PBS KIDS Nature Cat mascot will be attending for photos and summer activities.

**May 25-26** – Idaho Falls Zoo STEAM Days from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. Wildflower seed bombs STEM activity.

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**Family & Community Learning in Caldwell**

We held our latest series of Family and Community Learning Workshops in Caldwell with more than 60 kids and parents in attendance.

Guest speaker Korinna Guillinta, an electrical engineer at Hewlett Packard, shared how she became an engineer and gave demonstrations on static electricity and augmented reality.

During these workshops, IdahoPTV’s family education specialist, Florina Ruvio, guides parents and children as they work together on a variety of science activities. We provide dinner, along with the handouts and supplies needed to complete each activity.

While the children listen to a story, we give parents instructions and vocabulary to discuss the science behind the experiment. Together, families explore a variety of STEM concepts. Activities include making instruments, testing how well objects bounce, and building bridges.

If your school or organization would like to host a Family and Community Learning Workshop, contact Florina Ruvio at florina.ruvio@idahoptv.org or (208) 373-7220.

Find out more about our Education programs at [https://www.idahoptv.org/education](https://www.idahoptv.org/education).
Elk are part of the ungulate family (animals with hooves) but have adaptations that make them special. Their foot structure helps them handle uneven ground – and elk actually run on their tiptoes. Find out more about these amazing creatures in this month’s videos from Science Trek.


The Science Trek website has facts, games, links, and lesson plans correlated to Idaho and national science standards.

In the News

Idaho Debates: What voters should know, role in Idaho election

By: Nicole Camarda Posted at 5:51 PM, Apr 20, 2022 and last updated 9:21 AM, Apr 21, 2022

The Idaho Debates are an election year tradition and have been a campaign staple for years. The platform gives candidates a chance to state their goals and campaign talking points on the air, broadcasted across the state.

This year’s debates are different than years past due to key debates being canceled.

“Idaho Public Television reaches 98% of Idaho households over the air so whether our viewers are watching from Challis or Sandpoint or Bear Lake, we want them to have access to the same information that is going to affect them no matter where they live in the state,” Idaho Debates Lead Producer and Moderator Melissa Davlin said.

The Idaho debates are just one tool candidates can use to get across their goals for office before Idahoans cast their votes.

“People also want to see the candidate. They want to hear them speak, they want to see how they address issues they would have to address in office and make their case of why they would be right for that public office,” Idaho Press Club President Betsy Russell said.

This year, the debates look different as multiple high-profile debates aren’t happening.
“We’ve had some interesting circumstances this year where we’ve had three high profile debates not happen because the candidates declined to debate in the first place or because they changed their minds when we wouldn’t change our rules to tell them which reporters were on our panel,” Davlin said.

Rep. Priscilla Giddings of Whitebird pulled out of the debate for lieutenant governor against the Speaker of the House Scott Bedke of Oakley over the non-disclosure of the panel of journalists. The Giddings campaign didn’t want certain reporters on the panel, claiming they are biased.

“Reporters are those who cover the news in Idaho and in the case of the Idaho debates, they’re the ones who pose the questions to the candidates to get them to enunciate their views on the issues to the voters,” Russell said.

Most recently incumbent Gov. Brad Little declined the invitation to debate — a first in over 30 years.

“When an incumbent governor is seeking reelection, we have a very strong tradition in Idaho where they still make their case to the voters as to why they should be elected to another term as opposed to those who are challenging them and our governor, governor Little declined to debate saying that he thought his record was ‘non-debatable,’” Russell said. “We generally do consider incumbent’s records in office to be debatable. That’s what voters do. They look at the incumbents, they look at the challenges, and they decided what they want to have for their government going forward whether they want to reflect the same person or go with somebody else and that’s part of the function of the debates.”

“I think it's a huge disservice. Even though it's a closed republican primary there are 475,000 republican affiliated voters in the state of Idaho. The majority of those voters are not going to be able to attend in-person campaign events. Our gubernatorial debates run anywhere from 60 to 90 minutes and that gives the candidates time to compare and contrast themselves to each other and tell voters why they deserve a vote,” Davlin said.

Debates are held for general and primary elections, but in a Republican-dominated state the primary debates carry more weight and often the winner of the primary will go on to take office in the November election. This makes it important these debates take place between candidates.

“I would say watch them. See if they help you make up your mind. Particularly if you are not familiar with the candidates. This is an excellent tool for voters,” Russell said.

Still to come are GOP Superintendent of Public Instruction debate on April 25 and the GOP Secretary of State debate on April 26.

“The more information we can get out to Idahoans right now, the better. We are nonpartisan. We do not support or oppose any candidate, our only interest, our only mission is getting information to voters," Davlin said.
Attorney general hopefuls spar in statewide debate

By BETSY Z. RUSSELL brussell@idahopress.com Apr 20, 2022

BOISE — The three GOP candidates for Idaho attorney general faced off in a spirited debate on statewide television, with incumbent Lawrence Wasden and challengers Raul Labrador and Art Macomber offering differing views of the role of the state’s chief legal officer.

“The most important thing that I have is the political experience,” said Labrador, a former four-term 1st District congressman, and before that an attorney and member of the Idaho House. “This job is not just a legal job, it’s a political job.” He said, “I would just be a lot more aggressive.”

Macomber decried both Wasden and Labrador as “insiders,” charging that Wasden, the state’s longest-serving attorney general, is “corrupted by 20 years of cozy relationships with the political insider class,” and Labrador, who lost to current Gov. Brad Little in the GOP primary for governor in 2018, is a “legislator turned lobbyist” and “establishment candidate” who “will provide lackluster job performance as he prepares for his 2026 gubernatorial bid.”

Wasden said, “The choice in this race is very clear. You can choose the Idaho way, or you can choose the D.C. Beltway. You can choose an attorney general that follows the law, or one that thinks he’s a congressional activist or a policy maker. I’m not running for Congress. I’m not running for A.G. so I can use it as a stepping stone to become the governor. ... I call legal balls and strikes fairly and squarely. I don’t waste your time and trust by throwing you a curve ball. I don’t shade the truth just to score political points. Either it meets constitutional muster or it doesn’t.”

The full hour-long debate, which aired statewide on Tuesday evening on Idaho Public Television as part of the “Idaho Debates,” can be seen online at idahoptv.org/idahodebates. Additional debates coming up in the series include one April 25 among the GOP primary rivals for state schools superintendent; and another April 26 among the GOP candidates for Idaho secretary of state.

In the attorney general race, the winner of the GOP primary will face Democrat Steve Scanlin in November; he’s unopposed in the Democratic primary.
Responding to questions from a panel of reporters, the three candidates covered issues ranging from state Land Board positions to joining multistate lawsuits to relationships between the executive and legislative branches. The debate was moderated by Melissa Davlin, host of Idaho Public Television’s “Idaho Reports,” and the League of Women Voters of Idaho provided the volunteer timekeepers. The Idaho Debates are a collaboration between the Idaho Press Club, Idaho Public Television, the League, and Idaho’s state universities.

All three candidates appeared to enjoy themselves, with both Macomber and Labrador pronouncing it a “spirited debate” and Labrador calling it “fun.” Wasden had some of the debate’s most colorful pronouncements, dubbing some of his opponents’ allegations “hogwash” or “utter nonsense,” then citing specific Idaho statutes to refute them.

Labrador charged that during the worst of the coronavirus pandemic, “The governor was doing things that were probably unconstitutional, that were outside the law,” and said the attorney general should have stopped him. “Sometimes you have to tell the governor no,” he said.

Macomber took that charge a step further, saying when Gov. Brad Little allocated millions in federal CARES Act COVID-19 aid to the state, Wasden “wasn’t able to keep him within the bounds of the law.”

Wasden responded, “First of all, it’s really important that we take a look at the actual language of the law.”

Idaho law specifically authorized the governor to spend the CARES Act funds, he noted, in Idaho Code Section 67-3615. “There is a statutory framework,” Wasden said. “The attorney general’s job is not to make the governor’s decision. The attorney general’s job is to give advice and to represent the governor. That’s what a lawyer does. ... He doesn’t get to usurp his client’s authority or attack his client.”

Macomber disagreed. “Attorneys keep their clients within the law; that’s what we do,” he said. “It’s not as if Gov. Little is some kind of a meth-head who’s going to go break the law regardless, OK? That’s not true. He’s the governor of the state of Idaho. So he should be susceptible to reason.”

Labrador said, “I have over 33 legislators that are endorsing me in this race. ... They don’t trust the attorney general any more, they don’t trust his legal advice – even when he gives good legal advice, they ignore it.”

Wasden said, “I have some clients that don’t want to receive good legal advice and they choose not to, and it costs the state dearly. We try and help them to improve their legislation. But some of them just simply are unwilling to accept good legal advice. That’s not my choice; that’s their choice.”

Morgan Romero of KTVB, who was one of three reporter panelists along with Keith Ridler of the Associated Press and James Dawson of Boise State Public Radio, asked Wasden, “Who are you referencing specifically?”

“Members of the Legislature, specifically,” Wasden responded. “Some of them have a vision of what the state is and has and can do, which is not correct. On one occasion, I had a legislator who said, ‘We can do anything we want, because we’re the Idaho Legislature.’ The answer is, ‘No, you can’t. You’re limited by the Constitution.’ That’s a critical factor. ... The answer is you can’t do whatever you want – you have to comply with the Constitution.”

Macomber pointed to both Wasden and Labrador as “two insiders battling over who can get more endorsements from the Legislature,” and said, “There’s a fundamental separation of powers issue here which has not been
recognized, which is that the attorney general’s office, the executive branch, should not be giving legal advice to the legislative branch. The legislative branch should have their own attorneys in-house.”

Wasden retorted, “That answer completely ignores the Idaho law. The attorney general is bound by the law.” He noted that Idaho Code Section 67-1401 “says that the attorney general renders a legal opinion upon request by any member of the Legislature. I don’t get to change that language. When I am asked, I am required to give an opinion, and my opinion is a legal opinion.”

Then, he said, “They get to make their policy choices. ... I’m not telling them what to choose.”

Labrador said he’d be willing to work with Little should Little be reelected as governor and Labrador be the new attorney general. “Absolutely, I will have to work with whoever the governor is, and I will have to have a cordial relationship with the governor,” he said. He said he’d do so with “pushback,” because, “That’s what the people of Idaho demand.”

Labrador and Macomber both criticized Wasden for not joining more federal lawsuits, but Wasden said, “I sued the federal government over vaccine mandates. I’ve sued the federal government repeatedly. ... You have to try and make sure that you have a legitimate cause of action, and that’s what we do.”

Labrador responded that he’d be “more aggressive,” saying, “I think the greatest battles for the soul of our nation and the soul of our state are happening in the federal courts.” He claimed that Wasden “sits back” rather than get involved.

“Hogwash, hogwash,” Wasden responded. “We’re not afraid to file lawsuits. We do it all the time.”

When Dawson asked Labrador if he was prepared to handle a workforce the size of the Idaho attorney general’s office, which includes 120 lawyers, Labrador said, “In Congress, we had 15 employees that worked for us in four different offices. ... I constantly hired and fired employees. I worked with government employees. ... I have plenty of experience.” He said, “I think I would do a very good job doing that.”

Macomber, a land-use attorney, declared in his closing statement, “Vote Macomber or suffer the corrupt Boise elite for another four years.” Labrador said, “The reality is that Idaho needs a new attorney general.” Wasden said, “Abraham Lincoln said, ‘Put your feet in the right place and stand firm.’ That’s my promise to you, that’s what I’ve done and that’s what I’ll continue to do.”

Superintendent candidates verbally battle for GOP nomination

Blake Jones 04/25/2022

State superintendent candidates Debbie Critchfield, Branden Durst and Sherri Ybarra verbally battled for the Republican nomination Monday night, energetically clashing on school policy and trading one-liners in an hour-long debate broadcast across the state.

The three GOP primary contenders put their campaign messaging on full display during Idaho Public Television’s Idaho Debates. Ybarra flexed her seven years in office, Critchfield struck at Ybarra’s lack of leadership, and Durst, again, portrayed himself as an outsider in the field.
“I believe we need to get government out of the way and let parents lead as God intended,” Durst said.

The debate saw:

- Durst defend his conduct during a profane exchange that occurred after a legislative committee and decry the Senate’s decision not to hear a bill that could have included jail time for librarians who disseminate “material harmful to minors.”
- Ybarra and Critchfield, who was president of the State Board of Education early in the pandemic, defend their roles in responding to the pandemic.
- The trio split on issues from critical race theory to backsliding early literacy test scores.

The same was the case for early literacy funding, a hot topic in education politics this year.

From open to close, Critchfield questioned Ybarra’s strength of leadership, arguing that the superintendent has played a back-seat role in securing increased funding for early literacy and more from the Legislature.

“What is it that is driving education?” Critchfield rhetorically asked, crediting Gov. Brad Little, and downplaying Ybarra’s role, in locking down a $46.6 million increase in early literacy funding from the Legislature this year.

Notably, Ybarra had requested $39.3 million for full-day kindergarten programs, a smaller predecessor to Little’s $46.6-million ask.

Opposing the literacy funding boost, now signed into law, Durst echoed critical lawmakers, who said increased early literacy funding would cause the shuttering of half-day kindergarten programs for families who want them.

Durst, a former Democratic state senator, repeated his support for a failed bill that would have allowed parents to spend tax dollars on private school tuition through education savings accounts.

“I believe that we should have the public schools competing with private schools for money and for students,” Durst said.

“With some study” Critchfield said she would support such a proposal if “we’re not defunding our public schools” and “it could not come at the expense of our rural schools.”

Ybarra repeated a hardline stance that she’s made on the campaign trail, opposing any tax money toward private school tuition and saying her opponents are “voucher supporters” to the vocal opposition of Critchfield.

Things turned testy at times. At one point, as Ybarra touted an increase in the number of charter schools in the state, Critchfield interjected, pointing out that Ybarra isn’t on the state charter school commission that authorizes new charters.

Ybarra shot back, “Excuse me. Like in a third-grade classroom, we teach our students not to interrupt. I was speaking and you can have your turn in a moment.”

The debate closed with stump speech-style closers and final blows that were sprinkled with political overtones.

“On May 17, you’ll get your final chance to do something you’ve wanted to do for a long time, which is say ‘Let’s go Branden,’” Durst said, playing on the insult of President Joe Biden.
Critchfield in her closing remarks made an apparent dig at Ybarra’s use of “fuzzy data” to defend her record, and added, “It’s not about political rhetoric.”

Ybarra ended with, “Like the kids say, please vote for Sherri in the primary.”

The candidates will debate again Tuesday night at 6 p.m. on KTVB, the last joint appearance they have planned before the May 17 primary. The debate will also air on the Treasure Valley news station’s website.

While the superintendent’s candidates will debate twice, contenders in other statewide offices won’t ever square off. Some have refused to debate or reneged on commitments to debate, including Gov. Brad Little and Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin in the governor’s race; state Rep. Priscilla Giddings of White Bird in the lieutenant governor’s race; and incumbent Rep. Mike Simpson in his congressional race.

There aren’t any debates scheduled on the Democratic side of the superintendent’s race, where former Idaho Education Association President Terry Gilbert is unopposed. The Republican nominee will face Gilbert in the general election in November.

Rhetorical sparks fly as GOP rivals for Idaho Secretary of State face off in the ‘Idaho Debates’

Posted by Betsy Apr 26, 2022

In all my years of covering and being a part of political debates in Idaho, tonight was the first time I’ve seen this happen: The moment the cameras stopped rolling, just after Rep. Dorothy Moon, R-Stanley, had finished her closing statement, Sen. Mary Souza, R-Coeur d’Alene, declared, “I have to respond to the lie that she just told.”

“You voted for it!” Moon shot back, to which Souza responded, "No, you are wrong, and that was low."

Moderator Melissa Davlin of Idaho Public Television said, “The show just ended.” And then Souza and Moon got in each other’s faces, fingers pointed, arguing loudly. Rhetorical sparks flew and the aftermath of the debate was much more heated than the debate itself – and that’s saying something, as it was a lively three-way debate between Souza, Moon, and Ada County Clerk Phil McGrane, the three GOP candidates vying for the nomination for an open Idaho Secretary of State post.

Idaho Capital Sun reporter Clark Corbin has a full report on the debate online here, noting that two of the three candidates - Souza and Moon - denied that President Joe Biden won the 2020 election.

Leading up to the post-debate clash, Moon said during her closing statement, “I know that outside influence has definitely come into this state. The good senator has gone after the clerk on numerous occasions about taking Zuckerberg money and his outside influence, but you know, she has also voted for a Meta data center,” at which Souza interjected, “No, I did not!”

Moon continued, “And now Zuckerberg will have a permanent footprint in Kuna. And so Zuckerberg is here. ... So we’ve got to be very wise when we make votes. I didn’t vote for it, she did. Again, Mr. McGrane took the Zuckerberg money. We need someone who can look deeper into a bill and also look at the big picture, in the big picture Idaho wants to remain Idaho, we want to keep our rural values, we don’t want to have big globalist tech companies coming into this state, at least not from the people I’ve heard from.”
Souza, in her opening debate, had attacked McGrane for taking “Facebook money” to help with Idaho election costs amid the pandemic in 2020, prompting her to successfully propose legislation banning the use of any private grant money for election administration in Idaho. Actually, the grant funds were from a Chicago-based nonprofit called the Center for Tech and Civic Life that’s partially funded by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla; other funders include Google, Rock the Vote, the Knight Foundation and more. The Zuckerbergs' $400 million, one-time donation to the group in 2020 fueled grants to election offices across the country amid COVID-19 challenges.

The Idaho Capital Sun reported on the grant funding in January, and how Souza reacted with her 2021 legislative proposal. The nonprofit had granted more than $750,000 to 20 of 44 counties across Idaho in 2020, wrote reporter Kelcie Moseley-Morris. Nearly 2,500 grants were distributed across 49 states. Each Idaho county that accepted grant money had to have approval from its board of county commissioners.

Kristina Glascock, Twin Falls County clerk, told the Capital Sun she didn’t know of any ties to Facebook when her county learned about the grants, and none of it had any influence on election outcomes. Twin Falls County received $43,832 that was used for ballot printers, absentee ballot supplies, a camera system, staffing and personal protective equipment.

“It was kind of a gut punch when you start hearing, ‘Oh, the counties took Facebook money,’” Glascock said. “To me, we didn’t take Facebook money. To me, we applied for a grant. And our county, at least in Twin, we operate on millions of dollars of grant funding to survive. It was just another tool to survive, to get us through the additional expenses.”

Souza on Tuesday night said in her opening statement, “During the 2020 elections, Facebook money came into our Idaho elections. My opponent Ada County Clerk Phil McGrane was the first person and only person to be directly contacted by the Facebook funding group.”

She said her 2021 bill “has stopped any further Facebook money or any private dark money from coming into Idaho to run our elections ever again.”

McGrane, who gave his opening statement before Souza’s, focused on how “elections matter, and when it comes to our elections, experience counts,” touting his career, which has included counting almost 2.5 million ballots in Idaho elections. He never fired back over Souza’s Facebook allegation.

But Souza took umbrage at Moon’s closing-statement shot, noting that when the Legislature passed a tax incentive for data centers in 2020, it was for any data center investing $250 million in Idaho.

In a text later in the evening, Souza wrote, “It passed 9 months BEFORE the 2020 presidential election and it was a full YEAR before we discovered that Facebook money had come into our Idaho elections. By the way, the Data Center bill was one-of-a-kind in the nation because it was worded so that any tax exemptions would offset property taxes for the people of the community. At the time the bill was passed, no one in the Legislature knew about Facebook/Meta.”

That appears to be accurate. It’s also accurate that Souza voted for the 2020 sales tax exemption bill, HB 521, and Moon voted against it. It passed 37-21 in the House and 30-1 in the Senate. It was sponsored by Caldwell GOP Sen. Jim Rice and Rep. Greg Chaney, predicted to have a positive impact on the state general fund, and took effect July 1, 2020.

There’s another debate in the GOP primary contest for Secretary of State set for Thursday night on KTVB. You can watch the full Idaho Debate online here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv9Od_4Hnltt=2s, which aired live on Idaho Public Television tonight.