

Chase blasts Batt and Leroy

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The gubernatorial race heated up Wednesday as a Democratic party officer blasted two Republican office holders on the tactics they are using in criticizing the way Gov. John V. Evans is handling the state financing.

Cy Chase, St. Maries, new vice chairman of the Idaho Democratic Party, Wednesday described Lt. Gov. Phil Batt "deceitful" in his campaigning on state financing.

He also accused Attorney General David H. Leroy of giving him a flippant reply when he asked whether Batt's television ads are in violation of state law.

Chase, a St. Marie car dealer, in a telephone call to The Post-Register, said the television ads that Batt has been running in his campaign saying Evans is the only governor in the past 92 years who ran a budget deficit "is both deceitful and unethical and Batt knows it."

Chase, who served as Senate minority leader six years before voluntarily relinquishing his Senate seat two years ago, said he previously held high respect for Batt while the two were leaders in the Senate for many years, adding "this is certainly not the Phil Batt I used to know."

Chase said he called Leroy to ask an opinion whether the Information of Truth Law would apply in this case.

He said Leroy replied "I will put it at the bottom of my list and call you in 60 days and give my opinion." This, of course, would be after the Nov. 2 general election.

Chase said he is contacting the Democratic National Committee to ask a review of the Batt ads to determine if they are in violation of the Federal Communication Commission laws. Leroy, in a telephone response to The Post-Register, acknowledged Chase had called him in what he said "was an amiable and friendly tone and discussed his concern about the Batt ad. In the conferring I did not understand that he had asked for a formal opinion until I saw a wire story later. I did indicate to Mr. Chase that this office is not given to political opinions."

He said he told Chase that if he were interested in an opinion that he should make it in the form of a written request.



Cy Chase

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Leroy said the two points in question are whether the "unprecedented massive of \$13 million worth of bills from fiscal 1982 to fiscal 1983 creates a deficit for fiscal 1982; and that there are no statutes that address to a truth in advertising on a political campaign but are confined to trade and commerce.

"However," said Leroy, "Mr. Chase may get his wish for a formal opinion because Legislative Auditor Bruce Balderson has asked for interpretation on Idaho Code (59-1015) which prohibits the expenditure of money by a state officer in excess of legislative appropriations.

"The word deficit does not appear in this statute but I expect to have an opinion touching on this point in about 10 working days," said Leroy.

Leroy said he had already done a 13-page preliminary draft on this point.

Leroy recalled last June and July the Board of Examiners made up of Evans, himself and Secretary of State Pete T. Cenarrusa engaged in heated controversy over the way Evans had shifted the bills from the current fiscal year to the next. He said at that time the board had no alternative but to approve the bills.

Chase pointed out the Legislative Revenue Projection Committee determines the amount of revenue the state will generate for the fiscal year. He said the budget committee which sets all the budgets for all state agencies are fully controlled by the Republican party of which Batt is the leader.

"Governor Evans by law is required to cut back and not spend any more money than the state generates regardless of the budgets," said Chase. "Other governors over the years, including Republicans, have had to do the same as Governor Evans.

"The Republican legislative leadership in the past have boycotted meetings the governor has set up during the legislative session because they didn't want to listen to any of Evans' proposals. The Republicans have had full control of all legislative committees so any shortfall and fiscal problems of the state of Idaho are fully the Republicans' fault, not Governor Evans'.