Idaho GOP plans conservative course

Jan 27 1985

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It will be interesting to perceive how closely the Republican-controlled Idaho Legislature follows the legislative recommendations of the Idaho Republican Party.

Dennis M. Olsen

At the recent semi-annual meeting at Boise, the Idaho Republican Central Committee adopted resolutions aimed at pursuit of the conservative policies Republican legislators say were mandated from their lopsided victory in the 1984 general election.

Dennis Olsen, state chairman, said the central committee's actions were to set stringent conservative guidelines for legislators to follow.

Legislators already have taken action to implement some of these recommendations. Republicans control the House 67-17 and the Senate 28-11, just enough for a two-thirds Senate majority to override a gubernatorial veto.

Republican legislators have already taken action towards enacting a right-to-work bill and repeal of the Idaho Little Bacon-Davis Act. Both are vigorously opposed by the Democrats and Idaho labor unions.

The resolution calls for all Republican legislators to vote to override an anticipated veto by Democrat Gov. John V. Evans.

Other actions taken by the central committee follow:

- Approved a resolution calling for the Legislature and the governor not to increase taxes and to look at ways to reduce them.
- Urged the Legislature to pass a new legislative reapportionment plan which would eliminate so-called "floaterial" legislative districts and avoid using districts that cross county boundaries.
- Endorsed a resolution calling for most state government lawyers to be placed under the direction of the attorney general. The attorney general currently does not have direct control over attorneys who work for state agencies.
- Approved a resolution calling for the Legislature to pass a candidate-endorsement bill. It would require a candidate to receive the support of 25 percent of the delegates at a state convention before the name could appear on the primary ballot as a candidates endorsed by the party. It would not apply to local or legislative candidates.

This latter proposal stems from past primary elections free-for-alls, including as many as six Republican gubernatorial candidates in 1978.

This system was in force some 20 years ago but was later discarded by the Legislature as too stringent for prospective candidates.

Olsen, who spearheaded the resolutions, said, however, the endorsement of candidates would enhance party unity by allowing a maximum of four primary candidates for any office. In most cases it would not be more than three because it is unlikely four candidates would each receive exactly 25 percent of the delegates' votes.

Of all the resolutions, only the legislative reapportionment and candidate-endorsement propoals would be doubtful of passages.

There is a lack of unanimity among Republican legislators on these proposals. The same is likely true among the small band of Democrats.

The governor and legislators already have taken stands against any general tax increase, and are looking at ways to cut taxes.

This year's Legislature is likely one of the most conservative if not the most conservative, in history, following the last Nov. 6 general elections. There are probably a half dozen north Idaho Democrats who can be labeled moderates, and maybe liberals in three or four cases. Other legislators would be classified in categories ranging from conservative to ultra conservative.

Evans is well cognizant of that situtation. For example, he recommended a conservative state fiscal year budget of $600 million. It met little criticism from legislators.

He also skipped recommendations for a teacher career-ladder program and other state agency outlays. He would ordinarily would have included them if the newly-elected legislature had included more Democrats and moderate Republicans.

Olson said in his talk at the meeting that some five million illegal aliens could be replaced by as many teenagers who are now unemployed. He said this would help in reducing the number of illegal aliens in this country.

Olson also warmly backed President Reagan's so-called "star wars" defense system in the military budget.

He also urged forward steps in education, but outlined no specifics.

He told the more than 100 Republicans at the meeting the party must now consolidate its gains and push forward with conservative goals.

Among the goals adopted were to increase membership in the Republican Party and its various organizations. He also urged continued efforts to increase membership and support of the ethnic heritage groups, union and non-union blue collar workers, and to develop a statewide computer program in conjunction with major candidates to assist in voter identification, voter contact and finances.