# Idaho Democrats expect success in 1984 election

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For the first time in possibly a decade, Idaho Democrats sincerely expect to score successes on many levels in the coming year's elections.

Considering their past sorry records, it would appear the only way they could go is up.

The only spectacular successes they have had in 12 years is clinging to the governor's job — which of course is a major achievement — but on other fronts they have experienced nothing but setbacks.

The entire Idaho congressional delegation is Republican, following the ouster of Democrat Sen. Frank Church in 1980. Republicans control the Legislature 21-14 in the Senate and by a topheavy 51-19 margin in the House. Republicans hold four of the seven state offices and also rule in a majority of the county offices, 226 to 155, with about a dozen claiming no party affiliation.

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**There are no state offices up for election the coming year, but all of the legislators, three of the four congressional positions and nearly all of the county offices face the test of voters.**

Sounding the most cheerful note is Gov. John V. Evans who feels the Democrats will win control of the Idaho Senate, dramatically close the gap in the House and win one if not both of the U.S. House seats.

Most of the leading Democrats privately admit Republican Sen. James A. McClure appears safe for re-election but here again they feel there will be a surprisingly large vote against him.

The governor said in a Post-Register telephone interview Thursday that he plans an organization to get what he describes as "topflight candidates" to oppose Republican incumbents at all levels of government.

"We are optimistic over our chances," said the governor, "because we have topnotch candidates."

Pete Busch, Lewiston real estate agent and a comparative unknown, is the lone avowed candidate against McClure, but the two Republican incumbents, George Hansen in the 2nd District, and Larry Craig in the 1st District, face tough rematches with their 1982 opponents, Richard Stallings, Rexburg, Ricks college professor, and Larry LaRocco, Boise, state worker, respectively.

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**The Democrats plan to concentrate on the legislative races in hopes of picking up seats throughout the state, but particularly in the Boise, Twin Falls and Idaho Falls areas. They already hold most of the posts in north Idaho.**

Evans said he is pleased First District Judge Dar Cogswell ruled the present reapportionment unconstitutional but is disappointed he did not order an election this year. But regardless of how the reapportionment issue is settled, the governor said reports indicate excellent chances of successes in many legislative districts.

The governor said he expects the Democrats will score gains in Idaho Falls where John Combo, Idaho Falls attorney, challenges Sen. Dane Watkins in a rematch and where Iona Mayor William A. Storer probably will seek to fill the seat vacated by Sen. William Floyd. The other Idaho Falls Republican senator, J. Marsden Williams, also is expected to face tough challenges. Among those mentioned as possible candidates are Phil Jordin, well-known west Idaho Falls farmer, who ran a strong county commissioner race in 1978.

"Never before has it looked so good for the Demoratic Party," said Evans. "I believe this is due to the neglect demonstrated by the Reagan administration toward the common people to the working men and women and the minority groups of our country. In the west, the Reagan administration has demonstrated a total lack of sensitivity regarding the sale of land. In Idaho, when I recommend a higher budget for education, the Republican Party rejected the request, totally disregarding its overwhelming support by the people of Idaho."

**The governor said he expects the education issues will be one of the major factors that will react against the Republicans who refused to increase school funding. He said the main issues he will hit besides education are economic development, human resources, and local govenment financing.**

*Sees Democrat victories*

GOV. JOHN V. EVANS, seated at his desk, predicts Democratic victories on most fronts in the 1984 general elections. (Post-Register/Ben J. Plastino).