

Sen. Ricks says DHW cuts not aimed at ousting state's director Klein

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BOISE — Sen. Mark G. Ricks, R-Rexburg, denied Wednesday that his efforts to cut funding for the Department of Health and Welfare are designed to bring about the ouster of Milton Klein, state DHW director.

However, the denial was disputed by those present at a meeting last week when he was alleged to have made the statements.

Ricks issued the statement in reply to a Post-Register news article appearing Friday, which quoted him as saying the DHW financial cutbacks were aimed at Klein.

Ricks did acknowledge and emphasize that he resented the DHW executives at the state office sending their representatives throughout the state to urge people to contact their legislators to opposed DHW cuts.

"I have nothing against Mr. Klein personally," said Ricks. "I was trying to make a point that I'm critical of people in the Ivory Tower (DHW tower building) using state funds to tell their people in the DHW districts in the state to lobby people to contact their legislators against DHW cuts."

Ricks said he made this point when he talked with an Idaho Falls delegation which came to Boise Thursday to lobby against cuts in the regional management services,

The Idaho Falls delegation consisted of Kent Just, chairman of the Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce legislative committee; Bonneville County Commission Chairman Clyde A. Burtenshaw, indigent health care committee chairman of the Association of Idaho Counties; Nolan and Sue Young; David Groberg, director, and Patricia Lazzarotto, manager of administrative services, both of Region 7 DHW.

However, members of the Idaho Falls delegation Wednesday reiterated that in their meeting at Boise, Ricks expressed dislike for Klein and that his votes for DHW funding cuts were aimed in hopes of ousting him.

Gov. John Evans also criticized Ricks for his quoted statements, saying Ricks efforts to remove Klein by voting to drastically cut DHW funds "were the wrong approach."

Ricks said Mrs. Young's brother, Kent Henderson, is the regional director in the Twin Falls DHW office.

Ricks added that in the Joint Finance Appropriation Committee, of which he is a member, he sponsored the resolution last week calling for a \$200 million public education appropriation last week. The resolution was seconded by Sen. Dane Watkins, R-Idaho Falls, but was beaten 9-11. A resolution for \$195 million then was approved.

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BOISE — SEN. MARK G. RICKS, R-Rexburg, is one of the leaders as member of the Joint Finance Appropriation Committee, to drastically cut funding for the Department of Health and Welfare. He denies he seeks the ouster of Milton Klein, state DHW director.