

Leroy thinks special legislative session will be useless and costly

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Lt. Gov. David H. Leroy Friday termed Gov. John V. Evans' special legislative call as a "useless exercise of the Legislature."

He predicted it it will not produce further funding for education as Evans hopes, and instead will mean an added cost to the state of about \$15,000 a day.

The governor has called a special session for May 9 to appropriate \$13.2 million in added education funding, including \$9 million for public schools, \$3 million for higher education and \$600,000 each for vocational education and agriculture research-UI extension service.

"The Legislature," said Leroy in a telephone interview from his office in Boise, "wrestled in every possible way with necessary expenditures for funding methods. Anyone, including the governor, who assumes a brand new way will break loose in either three hours or three days, does not



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David H. Leroy

fully understand the legislative process.

"Calling a special session immediately on the heels of the regular session without an agreement with the legislative leadership as to what changes may be possible is bad strategy by the governor."

"If the governor wanted to wait for the economy to further improve itself, then we might have some hopes. But next week is too early to call a special session."

Leroy suggested the "governor should have signed the educational bills he complained about," then called a special session later in this calendar year to add the money if additional funding became available.

"I think," he said, "that procedure would have been more successful. I predict this special session will produce nothing new."

When asked if schools and local government can afford to wait until later in the year to ascertain if they will get more money, Leroy said the additional money is not available at this time, anyway. If a special session were called later in the year, they could still be helped if more money can be obtained, he said.

In response to Evans' hopes of getting about \$12 million more on

advance quarterly payments for corporations and individuals with a taxable income of \$50,000 or more, Leroy said "this legislation is not new. That concept has been debated about every single day in the Senate during the session just completed. The majority of the Republicans in the Senate, whether rightly or wrongly, has consistently rejected it. There is nothing that leads me to believe it won't be the same again."

Leroy said the prolonged legislative debate and considerable dialogue does have one redeeming factor.

"It can be a long-term advantage to improving the Idaho educational system," said Leroy. "I expect that in time we can improve the educational system in the matter of policies and practices."

He said this could be done next year as the economy takes an anticipated upturn.

He said the "Legislature has had an opportunity to carefully study education during this time of economic troubles. It is my thought those problems in state government and education can be used for a basis of new answers and approach."