



Op-Ed Submission
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Idaho is on the right path

By Lt. Governor Scott Bedke

Like so many of you, I set a resolution each new year. It's usually something I want to accomplish or something I want to work on. It's a time to set a goal to work towards, and hopefully, put me on the right path for the rest of the year. Each new year at the Idaho Legislature, we also make resolutions. We enter the Statehouse with ideas for change and plans for making this great state better for our families and communities.

Now that the 2025 Session has ended, I believe many of the resolutions my legislative colleagues and I made in January were brought to fruition by the legislation that was successfully passed.

Significant progress was made across a wide range of issues this year, and we made historic investments in the priorities that matter the most – starting with giving more money back to our citizens.

Hardworking Idahoans are now seeing more dollars back in their pockets, thanks to the largest income tax cut in state history. The passage of House Bill 40 has reduced our individual and corporate income tax rates, resulting in the return of \$253 million annually to taxpayers. This session also gave \$100 million in relief to property taxpayers while adding \$50 million to our public school facilities fund. In addition, we increased the grocery tax credit from \$120 to \$155 per person, helping ease that financial burden on families.

Idaho continues to lead the nation in fiscal responsibility while demonstrating how we can help take care of Idahoans' needs. No other state gives as much back to its people as Idaho.

However, everything else pales in comparison if we do not continue to prioritize public safety. This session, we reaffirmed this commitment by passing the Idaho Immigration Cooperation and Enforcement Act, or Idaho ICE Act. The Trump administration is taking decisive steps to protect our borders from drug and human trafficking, and this new state law supports our President by ensuring we keep dangerous and violent criminals off our streets.

Backing the blue is more important than ever, and I support the passage of House Bill 187 because it streamlines enforcement efforts. This commonsense legislation waives the Fourth Amendment rights for probationers and parolees, allowing our law enforcement to act quickly when violations occur and provide better overall support for community supervision programs.

I am also very proud of the efforts made to support Idaho families and children this session.

No parent should have to worry about accessing or paying for childcare while they are working to provide for their kids; that is why the Governor's signing of Senate Bill 1206 is so critical. This record-setting appropriation sets aside \$42 million over the next three years to expand statewide childcare options, from home-based centers to after-school programs, and to help offset the costs of quality options for young families.

Our foster care system will also see a boost with an additional \$23 million investment in IDHW's child welfare division. These funds will help us support at-risk kids before they become victims of abuse or neglect, provide support to keep families together, and deliver resources to those who enter foster care. This investment in our youth is an investment in a better future for us all.

One of the largest accomplishments at the Statehouse this year was another investment in our future – this time, our water future. This session, we committed \$30 million in ongoing funding for our water infrastructure, storage, and conservation efforts. Water is the very foundation of our economy, agricultural industry, and way of life. I am incredibly pleased that this funding passed and will be used to support our farmers, ranchers, and communities for decades to come.

My resolution each year is my purpose: to work hard as your Lieutenant Governor to uphold the values that matter and to protect the Idaho way. I believe those of us you've elected to collectively represent the citizens of Idaho have done just that. I think our future is bright.