

## BONNER COUNTY REPUBLICAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE

# Candidate Questionnaire

Idaho State Senate, District 1 — 2026 Republican Primary

### Introduction

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**Full Name:** Scott Michael Herndon

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**Position Sought:** Idaho State Senate, District 1

**How long registered as a Republican:** I can't remember exactly. I've always registered Republican. I missed a couple of elections in the mid-2010s, and Idaho dropped my active registration for infrequent voting — that was because I never focused on local and state politics back then, only national, and the federal government seemed hopeless to me at the time.

**Ever affiliated with another party?:** Not that I can remember or know of.

**Time in district:** 22 years. I moved to a house in Sandpoint in May 2004 and moved onto my property in Sagle, where I live now, in December 2006.

### Questions

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#### 1. What kind of professional, volunteer, or elected experience do you have that would prepare you for this position?

Previously served in the Idaho State Senate in 2023 and 2024. Former Bonner County jail chaplain, 2008–2013. Small business owner in the community for 22 years. Previous experience in accounting and finance, including as an independent consultant for Charles Schwab, Toyota, and others. 4.5 years as Chair of the Bonner County Republican Central Committee, Resolutions Committee Chair of the Idaho Republican State Central Committee, Region 1 Chair and member of the IDGOP Executive Committee. Husband, father of 8, married to one woman for 28 years.

#### 2. What is the role of government?

Government exists to protect individual liberty, enforce the rule of law equally, and defend the God-given rights of its citizens — not to manage their lives, grow without limit, or substitute its judgment for that of families and free markets. It should be small enough that it cannot trample the freedoms it was created to protect, fiscally disciplined enough that it does not burden future generations with debt, and accountable enough that no person — regardless of wealth or political influence — is above it.

When government forgets those limits, as it did during COVID, citizens have not only the right but the obligation to make changes. The proper role of government is to build

and maintain roads, protect borders, enforce contracts, keep communities safe from crime, and then get out of the way — because a free people, not a growing government, is what built North Idaho and what will keep it worth living in.

### **3. What is the role of the position you are seeking?**

The job of State Senator is a part-time citizen legislator position, not a career political office. The Idaho Legislature meets for a few months each year, and senators are expected to return home and live in the communities they represent the rest of the time.

In our form of government, the people of Idaho retain their sovereignty. They delegate that sovereignty to the Idaho Legislature to make laws that help support a civil society in which capitalism and human ingenuity can thrive. If Idaho is a family, the Legislature makes the rules for the family so that they can co-exist with each other — but those rules should be minimal: criminal law, a justice system, courts where people can seek redress of civil grievances and disputes. People should be allowed to mostly self-govern and exercise the maximum extent of their inalienable, God-given liberties. The Legislature also sets the family budget for maintaining the core systems of the state's civil government.

### **4. What is the source of authority for the position you are seeking?**

First and most fundamentally, it flows from the people themselves. The Idaho Constitution, like the U.S. Constitution, establishes that all political power is inherent in the people and that government derives its just authority from the consent of the governed. When voters elect a state senator, they are delegating a portion of their sovereign power to that individual to act on their behalf.

Second, it flows from the Idaho Constitution, which establishes the structure of state government, defines the powers of the Legislature, and sets the boundaries within which legislators may act. The constitution grants the Legislature broad authority to make law, appropriate funds, and conduct oversight of the executive branch — but it also constrains that authority, particularly where individual rights are concerned.

Third, it flows from the United States Constitution and federal law, which establish the supremacy of federal law in areas where the federal government has been granted authority, while reserving all other powers to the states and the people under the Tenth Amendment. This is the source of much of what I fight for — the argument that the federal government has exceeded its constitutional limits and that states like Idaho have both the right and the duty to govern themselves.

### **5. What made you decide to run for this position?**

I was living the life I had built — raising a family, running a business, employing neighbors, building homes for people I knew in a community I loved. I wasn't looking for a political career. I was content.

Then COVID happened. The government of Idaho made it a crime to go to church. I didn't just disagree — I sued the governor. Because some lines you cannot let stand.

But that moment only crystallized what I had already been watching for years. As an employee, a business owner, and an employer, I had seen firsthand how government makes everything harder — more expensive, more regulated, more burdened. I had watched my neighbors struggle with rising property taxes, scarcer jobs, and costs that never seemed to stop climbing. I knew the numbers behind the problem better than most.

The founders I admire believed that free people governing themselves was not just a political theory — it was a moral calling. When I looked around and saw that calling going unanswered in my own district, I realized I had a choice. Stay on the sidelines, or step up. Staying on the sidelines was no longer an option.

## **6. What would you like to achieve if elected?**

If elected, I want to finish what I started — and go further than I was able to before.

I want to end the property tax burden that is squeezing seniors on fixed incomes and working families out of the homes they have owned for decades. I want to eliminate the grocery tax so that every family in North Idaho keeps more of what they earn at the most basic level. I want to cut the regulations and red tape that make it harder to start a business, build a home, and create jobs in our communities.

I want to end Idaho's addiction to federal debt spending — \$1.5 billion of borrowed money flowing through our state budget that we pretend is free but that our children will spend their lives repaying. I want a state budget that is honest, justified line by line, and growing only when the economy and the people's needs genuinely require it.

I want to protect parental rights — in education, in medical decisions, and against government overreach into family life. I want school choice to be real and accessible, not blocked by legislators who answer to the education establishment instead of the families they represent.

I want North Idaho's roads and infrastructure to finally get the attention Boise has denied them for too long.

And above all, I want to prove that a senator who actually votes his convictions — who doesn't trade them for committee assignments, establishment money, or political comfort — can win, serve, and make a difference. Because if I can do it here, others can do it everywhere.

## **7. What does it mean to be conservative? Please provide examples applicable to the office you are running for.**

Being conservative means I believe in timeless principles, not temporary political trends. It means I trust people over government, freedom over control, and the wisdom of the founders over the impulses of the moment.

It means when the budget committee meets and agencies ask for more money, my first question is not "how do we fund this?" but "do we need this at all?" Idaho's budget has nearly doubled in six years. That is not conservatism. That is government growing because government always grows unless someone stops it. I intend to stop it.

It means when a bill comes forward to give illegal aliens driver's licenses, I don't look for a compromise. I vote no and then I pass a law that makes it illegal. The rule of law is not a negotiating position.

It means when the governor uses a pandemic as an excuse to make it a crime to go to church, I don't wait to see how it polls. I sue him. Because the First Amendment is not suspended in an emergency.

It means I believe parents — not school administrators, not government bureaucrats, not Boise — have the primary authority over the education and medical decisions of their children. That is not a radical position. It is the founding position.

It means I believe the dollar in your pocket was earned by you, belongs to you, and should stay with you to the greatest extent possible. Every tax I can cut, I will cut. Every tax I can eliminate, I will eliminate.

And it means I understand that conservatism is not about preserving what is comfortable. Sometimes it means fighting the establishment, bucking your own party, and standing alone on a vote. The founders didn't build this country by going along to get along. Neither will I.

## **8. What makes you a good candidate for this position?**

I have lived in this district for 22 years. I raised 8 children here. I built a business here. I employed people here. I am not a politician who moved to North Idaho to run for office. I am a North Idahoan who was pushed into politics because I refused to watch my community's freedoms erode without a fight.

I have the educational and professional background to understand the financial and fiscal issues that matter most in the State Senate. I have a degree in finance. I spent years as an independent consultant implementing financial systems for major corporations like Charles Schwab and Toyota. When I sit on the Finance Committee and debate Idaho's budget, I am not guessing. I understand how money moves, where waste hides, and how fiscal decisions ripple through an economy and into people's lives.

I have the voting record to prove I mean what I say. A 96.2% lifetime score from the Idaho Freedom Foundation. A 100% score from CPAC. A 97.9% score from the Institute for Legislative Analysis. Champion of Limited Government. These are not talking points — they are a documented history of doing exactly what I promised when no one was watching.

I have already won this seat once and proven I can govern. I passed real property tax relief. I cut income taxes. I banned illegal aliens from obtaining Idaho driver's licenses. I authored the bathroom safety bill. I reformed the budget process. These are tangible accomplishments that affected real people.

I have the courage to fight when fighting is hard. I sued the governor during COVID. I voted against my own party when my party was wrong. I stood alone on votes that needed someone to stand alone on them.

And I have the grassroots support of the people — not PAC money, not corporate checks, but neighbors and community members who believe in what I am fighting for. Ninety percent of my donations come from individual grassroots donors. That tells you exactly who I answer to.

### **9. What guides you in your decision making?**

First, my faith. I believe there is a God who created this world, who established the principles of right and wrong, and to whom I am ultimately accountable — not to a party, not to a PAC, and not to a poll. That doesn't mean I impose my faith on others. It means I have a North Star that no political wind can move. When a vote is hard and the pressure is real, I know where to look for clarity.

Second, the founding principles of this nation. I have read the founders extensively — Madison, Jefferson, Hamilton, and the arguments they made for a free people governing themselves under limited government. These are not abstract historical documents to me. They are the most sophisticated and successful framework for human liberty ever devised. When I face a question in the Senate, I ask what the founders understood about the proper role of government — and the answer almost always points toward less government, not more.

Third, the Constitution — both the United States Constitution and the Idaho Constitution. These are not suggestions. They are the law that governs the law. When legislation conflicts with constitutional principles, my vote is not a close call.

Fourth, the people of District 1. I live among them. I know them. I know what they are struggling with and what they value. A senator who loses touch with the people he represents has lost the most important compass he has.

And finally, the record. I ask myself a simple question before every vote: will I be able to defend this vote to the people who sent me here, on the basis of principle rather than politics? If the answer is yes, I vote yes. If the answer is no, I vote no — regardless of who is watching or what it costs me. That has produced a 96.2% Freedom Score. It has also produced some lonely votes. I would not change either one.

### **10. Define regionalization and your position on it.**

*[TO BE COMPLETED]*

### **11. Please indicate all exception(s) you have to the Idaho Republican Platform by Article and Section number.**

I am in agreement with the Idaho GOP Platform.

### **12. Have you received any endorsements from other people or organizations? If so, please list.**

The Kootenai County Republican Central Committee has endorsed me. I am expecting endorsements from pro-gun groups and pro-life groups, but I covet most the endorsements of my friends and neighbors in this community — and it is those that I seek above all others.

**13. Are you affiliated with any political groups, clubs, or organizations? If so, please list.**

Current Chair of the Bonner County Republican Central Committee. Region 1 Chair for the Idaho Republican State Central Committee and member of its Executive Committee.

**14. Feel free to share anything else you'd like voters and the BCRCC to know about you.**

I want voters and the Bonner County Republican Central Committee to know a few things that don't always make it into a campaign mailer.

I am not a professional politician. I never wanted to be. I was building homes, raising children, and living my life when government pushed me past a point I could not ignore. I got into this fight because I believed someone had to, not because I was looking for a title or a career. That has not changed.

I have paid a price for my convictions. I lost this seat in 2024 by 613 votes — in a race where hundreds of thousands were spent by establishment PACs to defeat me. That kind of money doesn't get spent on someone who isn't a threat. I take it as a compliment, and I am back.

I want you to know that my family is not a campaign prop. Arlene has been my partner in every sense of the word through 28 years of marriage, eight children, a farm, a business, and now three senate campaigns. My children are grown and woven into this community. This is not a performance of North Idaho values — it is our actual life.

I want you to know that I understand the finances of government at a level that most legislators do not. I have spent my career in accounting, financial analysis, and financial systems. When I talk about Idaho's budget doubling in six years, or \$1.5 billion in federal debt spending flowing through our state, I am not reading talking points. I understand exactly what those numbers mean and exactly what needs to change.

And I want you to know that I will never stop fighting — even when the vote is lonely, even when the establishment pushes back, even when it would be easier to go along. North Idaho sent me to Boise to represent North Idaho. That is the only job I intend to do.