

# REVIEWED

Name: Melissa Wintrow

Office Title: State Representative

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SECRETARY OF STATE  
STATE OF IDAHO

## Biography and Qualifications

**Melissa Wintrow** is a seasoned college educator who has devoted more than 25 years of service to providing leadership to students, faculty and staff. She has held formal leadership positions as a Women's Center Director, Faculty in Residence Program Director, Program Manager for N.E.W. Leadership (a national women's leadership institute), and instructor of Gender Studies. She possesses extensive experience in diversity training, facilitation, leadership development, conflict resolution, and curriculum design. At Boise State she created an advocacy program to support victims of sexual violence and university policies to hold perpetrators accountable.

Melissa translated her vast experience in education into a small business, which she co-owns, called SAGA Strategic Consulting. She has provided keynote addresses, workshops, and team development activities to college campuses, non-profits, government agencies, and corporations.

The decision to run for office was spurred on by encouragement from colleagues and her involvement as a Program Manager for N.E.W. Leadership Idaho. N.E.W. (National Education for Women) is an intensive weeklong instituted for college women run through Rutgers University's Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP). The purpose of the institute: to inspire more women to run for public office. After implementing this conference and mentoring numerous students, especially women, it was clear that it was time for her to "enter the arena," and utilize her skills to better our state.

As a legislator, she is currently involved in the National Institute for Civil Discourse, an organization that promotes civil discourse in politics. In her first term as a legislator, she passed two important pieces of legislation: 1) the Rape Kit Processing Act creates statewide standards for sexual assault evidence collection and processing; and 2) The Right to Try provides patients with a terminal diagnosis the right to try to save their own lives by accessing an investigational drug.

Melissa prides herself on learning from everything she does. She completed a self-supported bicycle trip riding 4,200 miles across the U.S. and finished an Ironman (Ironman Arizona) without being an experienced athlete. What did she learn? No matter how daunting a challenge can be, if you do the training, you can complete your goal. She pushes herself outside of her comfort zone time and again, encouraging others to do the same, because this is truly where reward lies.

Melissa earned her bachelor's in English literature from Miami University in Ohio and her master's degree in Higher Education from the University of Georgia. She also worked at Eastern Michigan University, Michigan State University, Portland State University, and Boise State University.

## **Priorities**

### **Education**

Business leaders are clear; we need an educated workforce if our economy is going to thrive. Investing in a world-class educational system from early learning through career is the best investment we can make in our future. Education funding increased this year, but we're still at 2009 levels. We have to do better.

### **Thriving Economy and High Quality of Life**

We must be good stewards of our resources and protect air and water quality which make our state a great place to live. I will continue to protect our public lands from private interests who want to sell our legacy to the highest bidder. A strong economy relies on quality education, sound health care system, a stable tax structure, sustainable business practices, and fair treatment of employees. We must change the image of our state and create forward thinking strategies to promote an economy that works for everyone, attracts new business, and keeps talent in state.

### **Equality and Fairness for All Our Citizens**

I will continue to fight for fairness and equality for all citizens in our state. I advocate Adding the Words "sexual orientation and gender identity" to the Idaho Human Rights Act; no one should be fired, thrown out of their home, or denied public services based on who they are.

### **Transportation Funding including Public Transit**

As a state we are lagging behind in responsible transportation funding for road and bridge repair along with public transportation. The population of the Treasure Valley is expected to grow to over a million people by 2040, which translates into traffic congestion, longer commutes to work, and additional air pollution detracting from our quality of life. There is an estimated public transportation shortfall Ada and Canyon counties alone of over \$150 million per year. Currently gas taxes may only be used for construction projects on roads and bridges. A thriving economy depends on sound transportation policy and funding, which must include public transit. As a member of the Transportation Committee, I will work towards solutions for our growing transportation needs.