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Secretary of State - Candidate Statement

Name: Jane McClaran

Office Title: District 19 Representative, Seat B

Campaign Contacts: www.mcclaranforidaho.com ; bjbmccclaran@gmail.com

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SECRETARY OF STATE
STATE OF IDAHO

I am a fourth generation Idahoan who has lived here all my life along with the next two generations of family. I've invested 23 years serving the citizens of Idaho as a state employee and I am passionate about the future of this great state. If you're like me, you want a voice in state government and the decisions that affect our everyday lives. I am someone willing to commit the time and attention needed to be present and vote on the important issues facing our communities and state. I will play an active role in finding common ground and bringing all sides together in a meaningful and positive way to achieve critical objectives.

One of the main reasons people choose to live in Idaho is the extraordinary quality of life available to us. Protecting individual rights, determining appropriate land use, preserving water and air quality, and ensuring bountiful recreational opportunities are all critical issues that enrich and enhance our lives. However, my top priorities include fostering a quality public education system, insuring access to affordable health care for all citizens, holding government accountable and encouraging a robust and vibrant state economy.

Education: Our obligation is to ensure our children reach their full potential and are prepared to compete in a global economy. Performance measurements suggest that Idaho could do more to improve our education system and better prepare our students for success. However, there's been some confusion surrounding the Public Schools budget. The fact that discretionary funding has been restored to the FY09 level is well known, but what may not be clear to everyone is that the Public Schools budget as a whole is \$220 million more for FY17 as compared with the FY09 budget. Education is the largest General Fund investment in Idaho and I'm committed to work with stakeholders to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for these investments.

Government Accountability: As a Senior Budget Analyst for Governors Kempthorne, Risch and Otter, I felt privileged to prepare recommendations for all post-secondary education programs. In addition to education, I was involved with public safety, economic development, and natural resource agencies. My duties to partner in the development of agency operating budgets and insure compliance with statutory provisions gave me a solid understanding of state government operations. I spent many years analyzing proposed legislation and I drafted numerous amendments to Idaho Code and Administrative Rules and presented those bills and rules to legislative committees with great success.

My background in banking and finance taught me the importance of safeguarding Idahoan's money. I take this responsibility very seriously and work hard to remain focused on targeted, data-driven and sustainable government performance standards. I consistently promote a high level of accountability and transparency and believe taxpayers deserve good value for their hard-earned tax dollars.

Health Care: Statistics suggest a majority of adults in Idaho's coverage gap are working poor. Many are employed by small agriculture-related employers; a critically important contributing sector to Idaho's economy. The coverage gap population is ineligible for publicly-financed coverage through the Exchange, most do not have access to employer-based coverage through a job, and all have limited income available to purchase coverage on their own. Denying proper access to basic preventative and routine health care leads to reduced productivity, serious health conditions and increased costs over time. Medicaid is designed to provide a safety net of coverage for low-income people. I support expanding Medicaid eligibility to include low-income uninsured adults who don't qualify for the advance premium tax credit. I propose funding this option by eliminating the need for the Catastrophic Health Care Cost Program (CAT) fund, reducing reliance on Behavior Health and Public Health programs administered through the Idaho Dept. of Health and Welfare, and ongoing support from Millennium Income Funds.

Economy: Idaho's gross domestic product and transportation system are closely linked. That is why improving and maintaining Idaho's transportation system is a key component to growing our state economy. I support the development of a comprehensive and sustainable funding plan for transportation infrastructure maintenance. It is also important to cultivating a business friendly environment through workforce development, education and incentives to businesses that offer a living wage. Our economy can be further stimulated when combining these efforts with a simpler tax code and fewer regulations. Today's investment decisions will stimulate tomorrow's economic growth and will ultimately result in more revenue to support priorities like education, public safety and human services.

Please Vote: District 19 voters deserve more effective and collaborative representation. I do not view this position as a leadership role, but rather as a representative of my constituency. I am a consensus builder with proven results and I am committed to listen and represent your views and values in a useful and more effective way. Together, let's put my experience as a public servant in state government to work to address these challenges and to develop sound solutions. I ask for your support as I seek to represent District 19 in the Idaho House of Representatives.