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SECRETARY OF STATE
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Biographical Information: I spent the first dozen or so years of my life raised in a rural farming community outside of Blackfoot. I don't know what a standard childhood is, but mine was filled with the outdoors, building jumps for my bicycle, forts to play army, and playing baseball and basketball with friends during summers and winters. When my family relocated to Idaho Falls to be closer to my father's work, life continued as before; just a bit more suburban. I attended Taylorview Junior High, mowed lawns in the neighborhood for money, and picked the game of golf to fill my summers. Later I would attend and graduate from Skyline High School where I did what I suppose most students did . . . school, sports, and socializing, . . . and more school. The schooling worked and I ended up going to a semester of BYU-Provo before I left on a LDS mission in Croatia in 1999 until 2000. Upon completion of the mission I returned to BYU and continued my studies. I would spend the next four years studying microbiology and working in cancer research labs, which meant (unknown to myself) that I was becoming socialized into the life of the professional researcher. I would eventually graduate BYU with a B.S. in Microbiology and minor in Chemistry and begin a doctorate in Immunobiology at University of Cincinnati. I was a mediocre PhD student in Cincinnati. I kept my head above water, but not excelling. Numerous factors contributed to deciding to leave my study, but after I finished my coursework and exams I left my position as a doctoral student and kicked around Ohio for a bit longer working in R&D at Procter and Gamble for a while until deciding to try to get back into education at the teaching level. I headed back west and started a M.A. in Education at Boise State University in 2009. Over the next two years I spent a lot of time with other educators, in trying to catch up to my peers I was able to see education from a different perspective than most of my classmates. Because I had been trained in research, I couldn't help but notice the constraints on the teachers and that many of the problems they experienced were out of their control, most of them were just trying to make do with what they had and were reaching for anything to help with the difficulties of teaching. Much to the chagrin of my advisor, who enjoyed my STEM background while I worked as his graduate research assistant, I found a few classes in social theory and became captivated. I would graduate Boise State University, took a year to substitute teach in districts 91 and 93 in Idaho Falls, and then started a doctorate in 2012 in Manhattan, Kansas at Kansas State University studying sociology. I've been studying over there ever since with the goal to be a tenure track professor doing research in education and politics. Teaching is actually my passion, but I'm so used to looking at the world with a researchers curiosity I'm sure I'll always be doing professional research as well.

This brief summary brings me to where I am today, writing my dissertation to finish my PhD by studying education here in eastern Idaho. I'm studying BYU-Idaho as a unique university that is put together very differently than most schools in higher education. In the meantime, to make some money to survive, I substitute teach (again) in districts 91 and 93 while I read and write about sociology of education. One of my areas of expertise is political sociology

and so while getting myself accommodated with Idaho politics a few things stood out that were discomfoting. I had been raised to believe that democracy was the paramount political government type and that the US was the shining beacon of freedom for the world. However as I looked more into what it takes to be a full participatory democracy I was noticing that I really only was encouraged to be democratic every 2 years and that partisan politics dominated peoples' minds instead of the ideas of liberty, tolerance, and community. When I saw that my local legislative district was going to run unopposed I thought I'd do the minimum of at least making the ballot democratic. But the more I studied and followed state politics I noticed a pattern of single party dominance that worried me. I had studied single party systems while reading about other countries and even other states like Kansas and there was always an imbalance. Someone's rights were always being ignored or repressed, economic inequality became more visible, and politics were always out of sync with the people they were supposed to support. In all cases I studied one thing was lacking, participatory democracy. Instead of trying to play politics as usual I thought I'd take on the system itself. This is now my central focus, to fix the system, starting with the State House of Representatives.

Top Priorities: I have 2 Priorities. First, empower citizens by giving them direct democratic vote on important legislation via the mass communication technology that most of us use daily. This means that I can only vote according to the exact will of the community in district 30 and not according to party affiliation. Second, work to reverse the distrust in government by reestablishing local communities as the center of modern democracy.