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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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by George Prentice

Page 1 of 1

Idaho Secretary of State Confirms Medicaid Expansion Initiative Will Be on November Ballot

It's official. The Idaho Secretary of State's office announced this morning that the grassroots effort to expand eligibility for Medicaid will indeed be on the ballot in this November's general election.

For the sixth year in a row, the Republican-controlled Idaho Legislature chose in 2018 to push the state health care coverage gap to the back burner. But healthcare advocates from every corner of the Gem State remain undeterred in their efforts to take the issue directly to voters this November. The task is formidable: gathering a minimum of 51,000 signatures spread across the majority of Idaho's legislative districts. On July 6, volunteers lined the hallways of the Idaho Statehouse to deliver, in a bucket-brigade fashion, a steady stream of box that they said contained at least 70,000 signatures of eligible voters in favor of putting the Medicaid issue on the ballot. Organizers said their signature collection effort exceeded the geographic distribution requirements, meeting the threshold in 21 legislative districts instead of the required 18

This morning, Idaho Secretary of State Lawrence Denney gave the green light:

"The Secretary of State certified the initiative exceeds that threshold today, and it qualifies for the November 6, 2018 General Election ballot."

"The official certification from the Secretary of State's office confirms what we've known for a very long time: there is widespread support for Medicaid expansion throughout the state of Idaho", said Idahoans for Healthcare campaign manager Jefferson Kemper. "After volunteers spent months collecting signatures and talking to voters in all 44 of Idaho's counties, it's clear that Idahoans are ready to have a voice and take control of their own healthcare."

The proposed measure on this November's ballot will read as follows:

RELATING TO MEDICAID; AMENDING CHAPTER 2, TITLE 56, IDAHO CODE, BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION 56-267, IDAHO CODE, TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE SHALL AMEND ITS STATE PLAN TO EXPAND MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY TO CERTAIN PERSONS AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE IS REQUIRED AND AUTHORIZED TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION; AND AMENDING SECTION 56-262, IDAHO CODE, TO PROVIDE A CORRECT CODE REFERENCE.

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