Congressional Documents and Publications- Craig’s Weekly Column

Meth Not Even Once

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By Senator Larry Craig

One of the most memorable public service announcements of the 1980's involved an egg, a frying pan and a voice warning about the dangers of drug use. Another taught teens to 'Just Say No'. This year a new campaign is on the airwaves in Idaho targeting the state's number one drug problem, methamphetamines. With hard-hitting, haunting images, its message is simple: 'Meth Not Even Once.'

Idaho currently ranks fifth in the nation in methamphetamine use, when adjusted for population. The drug and its effects cost the state millions of dollars each year in enforcement and incarceration fees, and the toll it takes on our families is far worse. Last year alone, meth was directly responsible for the placement of 199 children in foster care. As I've traveled throughout the State, I've learned of children being raised by grandparents or other family members because this highly-addictive drug incapacitated their parents.

A few years ago our neighbor to the east, Montana, was in a similar situation, holding the same fifth-place slot Idaho currently does. A group of concerned citizens and businesses formed the Montana Meth Project and created anti-meth advertisements for television, radio, printed media and billboards. After just two years the results of the campaign were incredible: Meth-related crime was cut in half and the state's ranking dropped to 39th.

Last year a group of Idahoans, including the Governor and First Lady, came together to set up this proven program in our state, and in January the Idaho Meth Project officially launched. Along the way hundreds of individuals and local businesses have stepped up to provide what assistance they could to this project, but we must do more. I'm working with my colleagues in Congress to find sources of federal funding, and I know many Idahoans will contribute if they only learn more about this promising program.

Some may wonder how this campaign can be successful if they've never seen or heard a single ad. But this campaign is wisely putting ads where they will be seen by teens or young adults. If you're not part of the target population and want to see these award-winning television ads for yourself, you can do so on the website. They are straightforward and powerful, demonstrating the tremendous toll the drug takes on a life.

Recently I met with the executive director of the Idaho Meth Project Megan Ronk and First Lady Lori Otter. We shared our experiences listening to Idahoans who have approached us to share their family's encounters with this terrible drug. We also talked about how the Meth Project's website and advertisements can help other families avoid the same devastation.

If you are looking for a way to get involved, you can find suggestions on the website: www.idahomethproject.org . I hope Idahoans will take the chance to view these ads, and more important, become involved in this program, so our teens and communities can truly say they haven't experienced 'Meth, Not Even Once.'