



Lori Otter promotes meth project in D.C.

April 3, 2008
Kendel Murrant

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Idaho First lady Lori Otter addressed officials in the nation's capital Wednesday about the effectiveness of the Idaho Meth Project.

"Its results in Montana have been more significant than any drug prevention program in history, and I believe we are on a path to see the same benefits in Idaho," Otter said while addressing the House Appropriations Subcommittee of Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, chaired by Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-WV).

In her testimonial, Otter outlined the damage that meth causes in Idaho and the effectiveness of the program to fight it.

"As a former educator and school administrator, I have seen firsthand the impact of meth on our youth," Otter said. "The financial and social consequences of meth abuse in Idaho are devastating... the governor and I are committed to doing everything we can to rid our state of this terrible scourge."

Otter outlined to the committee the Idaho Meth Project and its goals to "un-sell" meth and reduce first-time use, especially for children and teens between the ages of 12 and 17, with a secondary audience of 18- to 24-year-olds.

The first lady said the project has brought about unprecedented results in combating the drug in Montana, and she is optimistic for great results in Idaho as well.

Otter said public cooperation on this project — and getting the project into more states battling meth — is a high-priority issue, and asked the committee to grant \$20 million for the meth project in the 2009 fiscal year.

"On behalf of the citizens of Idaho, as well as the 38 state leaders who are reaching out to the Meth Project for an answer to devastating meth abuse, I sincerely hope that Congress will respond to this challenge," she said.

Idaho's model for its anti-meth campaign, The Montana Meth Project, has reaped a positive outcome from their TV, radio and billboard spots, which launched in 2005.

When the Meth Project first launched in Montana in 2005, Montana ranked 5th among states for Meth abuse. After two years, the state now ranks 39th.

Meth use among teens in Montana has shrunk 45 percent. Meth-related crime has dropped by 62 percent, and employees testing positive for meth in the workplace has dropped 72 percent.

Aside from Idaho and Montana, five other states have begun to use the program: Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, Illinois and Hawaii. Enlisting Oscar star power The Meth Project now flexes star-studded power in its new series of advertisements featuring ads directed by Oscar-nominated filmmaker, Alejandro González Iñárritu. He has directed several acclaimed films including "Babel," "21 Grams," and "Amores Perros."

Along with three television ads directed by Iñárritu, the new series will also include four print and nine radio spots.

The Montana Meth Project will begin airing the ads immediately, while Idaho, still in Phase One of the project, will begin running them sometime in the future.