



**NELS MITCHELL**

★ FOR UNITED STATES SENATE

[www.nelsmitchellforidaho.com](http://www.nelsmitchellforidaho.com)

**PRESS RELEASES**

For Immediate Release

Contact: Betty Richardson – 208.250.7088

July 7, 2014

A MESSAGE FROM NELS MITCHELL IN RESPONSE TO RISCH FUNDRAISING EMAIL

Recently, a friend shared with me the latest internet fundraising appeal sent out by my opponent, Senator Risch. Risch's solicitation was full of unfounded assumptions and half-truths, but what most surprised – even amused – me was the fact that he was all excited because Idaho Democrats have sent an “agent” to oppose him.

“They’ve put up one of their Democratic agents to run against me,” he complained.

Agent? In some campaigns I could mention, that’s called a loaded word.

You might call someone who has the gall to oppose a self-important incumbent a “candidate,” or an “opponent” or even “the Democratic nominee.”

But an agent?

On second thought, though, my opponent – “the Republican agent” – might be on to something in a narrow-minded and backward kind of way.

Wikipedia, that fountain of knowledge on the Internet, defines “agent” this way:

“An agent is one who acts for, or in the place of another... one entrusted with the business of another.”

Boldly speaking for the senator as well as for myself, we are both agents in that sense. Just as the senator is an official agent of the Idaho Republican Party, I am proud to be an agent – more often called a nominee – of the Idaho Democratic Party. Voters gave me that honor and responsibility in the May primary, and I take it very seriously.

The difference, of course, is on whose behalf we act.

Risch aligns himself with special interests and their lobbyist --those powerful people who require agents like Risch to help them dominate the government for their own lop-sided benefit. Some of the special interest Political Action Committees that have written large checks to Risch's campaign include those affiliated with Koch Industries, Halliburton, RJ Reynolds, Occidental Petroleum, Marathon Oil, Credit Suisse, and JP Morgan, to name just a few.

I, on the other hand, will be an advocate for the tens of thousands of Idaho voters who need friends in high places. I will be an “agent” of those rank and file citizens -- seniors, veterans, hardworking families struggling to make ends meet -- who need a fighting chance against the high, the mighty and the soon-to-be-retired senator from Idaho.

The Democratic voters of Idaho have already done me the great service of making me their agent. Now I welcome the opportunity to broaden that assignment, to be the agent for all the people of Idaho.

I am Agent Nels Mitchell and I am at your service.

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*(A copy of the Jim Risch fundraising letter is attached)*



**From:** Senator Jim Risch <[jim@SenatorRisch.com](mailto:jim@SenatorRisch.com)>  
**Date:** June 30, 2014 3:24:21 PM MDT  
**Subject:** The Counterweight to Obama's Reckless Agenda

Friend,

I'm fighting with all my might to oppose Obama's reckless agenda, but I can't do this alone.

In case you didn't see my email from earlier this week, I'm facing a critical end of quarter fundraising deadline, and [I need your donation of \\$5, \\$10, \\$25, or more to help us reach our goal of raising \\$20,000 online before midnight on June 30th.](#)

With your support, I'll continue to work with my republican colleagues to repeal Obamacare and stop Obama's reckless agenda.

So please take a minute to read the email below and [consider making a donation of \\$5, \\$10, \\$25 or more today if you can help us in the fight for our conservative values.](#)

Sincerely,  
Jim Risch



Barack Obama is doing his best to advance a reckless, big-government agenda in Washington, but I'm fighting harder than ever to stop him.

As the Senate's most conservative member, I'm working with my republican colleagues to repeal Obamacare, get our National Debt under control, and defend our constitutional freedoms. I am leading the effort to stop the IRS from targeting conservative non-profit groups and protect free speech.

My unwavering commitment to our conservative principles has made me a top target for the liberals. They've put up one of their Democrat agents to run against me, and I need your help to ensure we emerge victorious in November.

We're facing a critical end of quarter fundraising deadline on June 30th. We must raise an additional \$20,000 online to hit our goal and fully fund our outreach plans for the summer. [Can you chip in \\$25, \\$50, \\$75, or more today to help us reach our critical fundraising goal and help me continue the fight against Obama's reckless agenda? Even a donation of \\$5 will go a long way for us.](#)

I'm confident my fight to curtail the out of control federal spending and my conservative record reflects the majority will of Idaho voters, but I also know that my opponent will have a deep well of liberal special interests from Washington that will be working to defeat me.

On the other hand, my opponent will be another reliable vote for Obama and Harry Reid's reckless liberal agenda. He will side with them to continue funding Obamacare-the law that has done more to kill jobs and stifle our economy than any other since Obama took office.

And that's why I'm turning to you today. I need support from committed conservatives like you-people who are ready to put in the effort needed to reverse the damage done by Obama's liberal agenda.

If we have a strong response today, we will be able to continue to engage with conservatives across the state. [So please, click here to pitch in \\$25, \\$50, \\$75, or more today to help us reach our end of quarter fundraising goal and counter my opponent's Washington special interest money.](#)

I'm proud of my hard-earned reputation as a "no-nonsense, get the job done" conservative leader. I've received the titles of "Obama's biggest foe" and the "#1 Most Conservative Member" for my commitment to our shared conservative values.

With your support today, I will continue to counter Obama's liberal big government agenda at every turn.

Please, dig deep and help us reach our critical fundraising goal. [Click here to donate \\$25, \\$50, \\$75, or more today to help us reach our end of quarter fundraising goal and keep me in the fight against Obama and his reckless agenda.](#)

Contact: Betty Richardson – 208.250.7088

June 26, 2014

## It's Time to Make the Minimum Wage a Living Wage

By U.S. Senate Candidate Nels Mitchell

The minimum wage should be a living wage. This is a matter of fundamental fairness and economic justice. By setting the minimum wage, Congress can prevent wages from dropping to poverty levels. A person who works full time should not need to rely on public assistance.

In past years, Congress increased the minimum wage to keep pace with the cost of living, raising it to \$1.60 in 1968, \$2.30 in 1976, \$3.35 in 1981, \$5.15 in 1997, and \$7.25 in 2009. Unfortunately, Congress has let the minimum wage fall behind. The current minimum wage is worth 25% less in buying power than the minimum wage I received in the 1970s while washing dishes at Boise's Elk's Hospital or moving irrigation pipe at a Garden Valley ranch.

Traditionally, both parties supported raising the minimum wage to keep up with the cost of living. No longer. In April, Senator Risch and other far right Republicans, blocked an effort to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 over a three year period. Nonetheless, raising the minimum wage has overwhelming support: a recent Gallup poll found that even 50% of Republicans supported it.

The \$10.10 proposal would have helped about 176,000 people in Idaho where 29,000 workers receive the bare minimum and 147,000 others make less than \$10.10. Working 40 hours per week for 52 weeks at \$7.25 an hour, a minimum wage worker earns about \$15,000 for the year. If the minimum wage is raised to \$10.10, that same worker would receive almost \$6,000 more a year. That could make a huge difference in someone's life—a decent apartment, school supplies for a child, a more reliable car.

Without doubt, raising the minimum wage will also help local economies. Minimum wage workers will not ship their earnings to the Cayman Islands or Swiss bank accounts. The additional income will be spent right here at home in Idaho.

Why, then, did Risch vote to kill the minimum wage bill? Perhaps he doesn't know that the cost of living has been going up. After all, Senators who receive \$174,000 per year salaries don't worry about making ends meet.

Some suggest that, by raising the minimum wage, we would somehow hurt teenage workers. But, the average age of a minimum wage worker is 35 years old. Almost 60% of minimum wage workers are women, and 25% are parents.

Others claim that raising the minimum wage may cost jobs. However, that argument ignores the research. The New York Times recently explained, "The minimum wage is one of the most thoroughly researched issues in economics...The weight of the evidence shows that increases in the minimum wage have lifted pay without hurting employment, a point that was driven home in a recent letter to [the President] and congressional leaders, signed by more than 600 economists, among them Nobel laureates and past presidents of the American Economic Association."

I suspect Risch voted to kill the \$10.10 minimum wage bill because special interests making record profits on the backs of underpaid workers wanted it killed. After all, minimum wage workers have no Washington lobbyists, and they can't write big campaign checks.

But minimum wage workers are not without power. They can vote.

It is time that low wage workers and those who believe in economic fairness stand up and make their voices heard. I support raising the minimum wage. Jim Risch doesn't.

Register. Vote. And remember in November.



# LET'S TAKE A VOTE: WHO IS IN FAVOR OF RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE?



REMEMBER, THE VOTE THAT CAN CHANGE THE MINIMUM WAGE

June 16, 2014

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson  
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## **RISCH TRIED TO BLOCK VETERANS' BILL**

### **Mitchell Calls Risch News Release "Shameful Deception"**

BOISE – U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell today said Jim Risch engaged in “a blatant and shameful attempt to deceive the voters of Idaho.”

On Thursday, Risch issued a news release touting his vote in support of a bill to address the crisis in veterans' health care. The bill passed the Senate 93-3 on Wednesday.

“He didn't tell the whole story,” Mitchell said. “He didn't tell voters that – just prior to the vote on the legislation – he voted against the motion that allowed the bill to come to a vote.

A vote against the motion was a vote to kill the bill. The motion needed 60 votes and passed 75-19, but had Risch prevailed, the bill would not have been voted on, and there would be no legislation to address the VA crisis.

Risch was joined by Ted Cruz, Mike Crapo and 15 other senators in the effort to block the compromise bill crafted by John McCain and Bernie Sanders. After their attempt to kill the bill failed, Crapo – like Risch – reversed course, and voted for it.

“Voting to block the bill was bad enough,” Mitchell said, “but Risch's release touting his support for veterans was just dishonest. Did he think they wouldn't find out that he had tried to throw them under the bus? Risch has again shown his true colors. He has consistently voted against helping veterans and improving the VA.”

Mitchell said Risch's attempt to kill the Sanders-McCain bill continues his appalling record of opposition to veterans and their needs, a record that has earned him failing grades from veterans' organizations.

The bill that passed the Senate addresses the long waits veterans suffer trying to see VA doctors. It adds doctors and nurses to VA facilities and allows veterans who can't get appointments or who live more than 40 miles from a VA facility to see private doctors instead.

“When I'm in the Senate I will support Idaho's veterans, and I will never issue self-serving releases that mislead the people who elected me.” Mitchell said.

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June 12, 2014

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson  
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## Mitchell Charges Risch Record on Veterans Is Terrible Commends Single Election Year Vote

BOISE – Responding to reports that Jim Risch signed on to legislation addressing the veterans’ health care crisis, opponent Nels Mitchell commended Risch for his support. Mitchell had previously called on Risch to back the legislation.

“Late support is better than nothing,” Mitchell said, “but it doesn’t obscure the fact that Risch’s overall record on veterans’ issues is terrible, one of the worst in the Senate.”

**Citing the website [votesmart.org](http://votesmart.org), Mitchell said Risch has a “D” rating from the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America**, a 0% rating from Disabled American Veterans, and just a 50% rating from the Vietnam Veterans of America.

“Those are appalling scores,” Mitchell said. “Idaho’s veterans deserve better from their Senator.”

Mitchell said he was particularly disturbed by Risch’s 0% rating on issues of concern to disabled veterans.

“He demonstrated why he has that rating just last February, when he opposed legislation that, among other improvements, would have improved VA health care services, and improved access to care and benefits,” Mitchell said. The February legislation that Risch opposed had been supported by the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and almost every other military and veterans’ service organization.

During his five years in Washington, Risch’s veterans’ record has included:

- Voting to cut the VA budget by over \$50 billion and forcing veterans to compete for funds for basic Benefits like disability and education.
- Voting against fully funding the VA.
- Voting against a bill that would have ended the practice of late VA budgets that have lead to inadequate planning and rationing health care for veterans.
- Voting against measures that would have helped veterans obtain jobs.

“Signing on to a bill that passed 93-3 is an easy thing to do in an election year,” Mitchell said. “When I am elected to the U.S. Senate, I will stand with our nation’s veterans on the hard votes as well as the easier ones.”

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June 11, 2014

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson**  
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## **Mitchell Says Risch Fails Idaho's Grads**

### **Senator No Strikes Again!**

U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell today said incumbent Sen. Jim Risch has “turned his back on Idaho’s student borrowers and — in many cases, their parents — who are struggling to pay back student loans, many of which were financed at rates as high as 7% or more.”

“Today Risch voted to block consideration of S. 2432, the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, a bill that would have helped 25 million Americans refinance their student loans at current market rates—around 3.86%. This is about fundamental fairness. If people can refinance their car, credit card, home and small business loans, they should be able to refinance student loans as well,” Mitchell said.

“More than 40 million Americans are saddled with more than \$1 trillion in student debt. This is stifling our next generation of innovators and inventors. Everyone deserves a fair shot at the American Dream. Lower interest rates will not only help people get back on their feet, but will also help our nation’s economy. By reducing monthly payments, people will have more money in their pockets to help make ends meet and spend in the private sector.”

Mitchell said that, unlike Risch, he would have supported this legislation. “I am disappointed, but not surprised, that Risch would oppose a common sense bill to give relief to debtors in a way that would also help the economy. If elected to the U.S. Senate, I will co-sponsor this critical legislation. Attaining an education should give people a brighter future, not saddle them with never-ending debt.”

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LOAN REFINANCING

SENATOR NO JIM RISCH

Man, that's one COLD FISH!

STUDENT DEBT

HIGH INTEREST COLLEGE LOANS

Tom Hume

June 10, 2014

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson**  
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## DO THE RIGHT THING, JIM...

### Mitchell Urges Risch to Support Veterans Health Care Compromise

**BOISE** – Two of the Senate’s strongest backers of veterans have agreed on a bill to improve services for veterans and fix the troubled VA health care system. Today, Nels Mitchell, the Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate, urged incumbent Jim Risch to back the bipartisan compromise.

“Jim Risch turned his back on veterans in February” Mitchell said. “This time he should do the right thing and not just pay lip service to the needs of veterans.”

Sen. Bernie Sanders, who chairs the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, and Sen. John McCain, a former POW and strong supporter of veterans, announced the compromise last Thursday.

The legislation would expand veterans’ access to health care while at the same time making it easier to fire VA officials for misconduct.

The bipartisan bill would build new VA facilities, hire additional doctors and nurses, and allow veterans to see certain private doctors if they experience long wait times or live more than 40 miles from a VA facility.

Mitchell said the private doctor option is particularly critical in rural states like Idaho. “Many Idaho veterans live a lot more than 40 miles from a VA facility,” he said. “This would give them a much-needed alternative.”

The bill would also provide in-state tuition benefits for spouses of troops killed in the line of duty, and increased access to health care for sexual assault victims. An independent commission would examine scheduling issues in more detail.

Mitchell said, “Money spent taking care of veterans is money well-spent. If we can afford to send Americans to war, we can surely afford to take proper care of them when they return home”

“I strongly urge my opponent to do everything he can to see that this bill passes. In the past, Risch has said one thing and voted the other way when it comes to supporting veterans. He needs to step up now.” The Iraq and

Afghanistan Veterans of America have given Risch a D grade on his veterans' votes, while the Disabled American Veterans have given him a 0% rating, according to Project Vote Smart.

The compromise bill could come before the Senate as early as this week.

June 04, 2014

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson**  
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## RISCH FAILS VETERANS

BOISE – U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell said today that Jim Risch is saying one thing and doing another when it comes to supporting veterans.

On Monday, Risch issued a release claiming that “. . . too many people have forgotten our defenders.” “It would seem that Jim Risch is one of those,” Mitchell said. “Risch gives lip service to ensuring that our veterans have access to healthcare and benefits,” Mitchell said, “but last February he voted to block legislation that would do exactly that. By voting to filibuster the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014, Risch turned his back on our veterans.”

“Risch could have been part of the solution,” Mitchell said “instead, he’s part of the problem.”

Idaho is home to nearly 126,000 veterans, according to the United States Census Bureau. Nearly 17% of Idaho’s veterans have a service-connected disability.

“As the son of a Navy veteran who saw combat in World War II, I have a tremendous appreciation for the legacy of freedom our veterans have left us,” Mitchell said.

The blocked legislation would have:

- Eased the backlog of 390,000 benefit claims that have been waiting action for more than 125 days
- Ensured that veterans benefits payments would not be delayed or jeopardized because of a government shutdown
- Expanded the Comprehensive Caregiver Assistance Program to veterans of all eras

Veteran caregivers have reported delays of up to two months for appointments. “A two month wait to even book an appointment is unacceptable,” Mitchell said. “I would have supported the legislation, and as a Senator I will take leadership on this issue.”

“Those who say that the current crisis is a failure of leadership are right,” Mitchell said. “The question for Idaho veterans is: where was Jim Risch’s leadership when they needed his support?”

Mitchell said Risch will have another opportunity to support Idaho's veterans. "The Restoring Veterans' Trust Act of 2014 will soon be introduced and, if passed, will fix some of the problems veterans now face in receiving timely help."

"Idaho veterans – indeed all Idahoans – should watch Risch's vote," Mitchell said. "His actions will speak louder than his words."



May 5, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Betty Richardson  
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## RISCH ALL OVER THE MAP ON SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE

### Fundraising Letter Clearly Supports Cuts

BOISE – U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell today took Jim Risch to task for trying to run away from his support for slashing vital programs like Social Security and Medicare.

Mitchell released the following summary of Risch's all-over-the-map record:

In a recent e-mail fundraiser, Risch had this to say about Social Security, Medicare, Veterans Benefits and other "entitlements":

***"You can take this to the bank – I'm going to have a perfect voting record when it comes to . . . cutting entitlements . . . "*** (Emphasis in original.)

A "**perfect voting record**"? There's no wiggle room in that statement. It means that anytime a proposed cut to an "entitlement" program comes up for a vote, he'll vote for it. There's no other way to read those words.

And let's be clear about what entitlement programs are: there are some smaller ones, but mostly it's Social Security, Medicare and Veterans Benefits.

So Risch is clearly saying that whenever he gets a chance, he'll vote to cut Social Security, Medicare and Veterans Benefits, as well as Disability Benefits, the Childrens Health Program, and so on.

That's a pretty dramatic promise, and apparently one he doesn't want the general public to know about. When asked by the *Coeur d'Alene Press*, he said he wouldn't support cuts to Social Security, Medicare or Veteran's Benefits.

***"Those are, I think, legal and moral obligations. Those are things people earn."***

Well said, but totally opposite what he promises in his fundraising letter. There's no way those two statements can be consistent.

Answering the *Idaho Statesman's* Voter Guide, Risch equivocates again. This time he says,

***“I do not favor any cut to the current recipients of Social Security, Medicare, veterans’ benefits, or those who are soon to become recipients.”*** (Emphasis added.)

Similarly, in response to the Republican Party Platform, he writes:

***“Social Security in its present form is unsustainable and adjustments must be made which do not impact in any way present or soon to be retired Americans . . . “*** (Emphasis added.)

Obviously, that leaves the door wide open to drastic cuts in benefits for everyone under, say, 60 years old. That’s a lot of Idahoans. And it still doesn’t explain his promise to have a “**perfect voting record**” on cutting entitlements. What will he do the next time someone proposes cutting benefits for current retirees?

Jim Risch has made all these conflicting statements within the past three months. If we go further back, it becomes clear that his promise to cut entitlements whenever he can is the most consistent with his record.

In 2012, for example, he supported Sen. Rand Paul’s proposed budget, which would have decimated Social Security and Medicare. On May 21, 2012, the *Lewiston Tribune’s* Marty Trillhasse wrote:

***“On average, Social Security benefits would drop 39 percent (under Rand Paul’s budget). The early retirement age would rise. Cost of living adjustments would fall. . . . Paul would cut Medicare benefits for current recipients. He’d eliminate the program in two years and replace Medicare with a voucher program. The eligibility age would rise to 70.”***

Pretty draconian, right? Draconian enough that only 16 Republicans voted for it. **One of them was Jim Risch.**

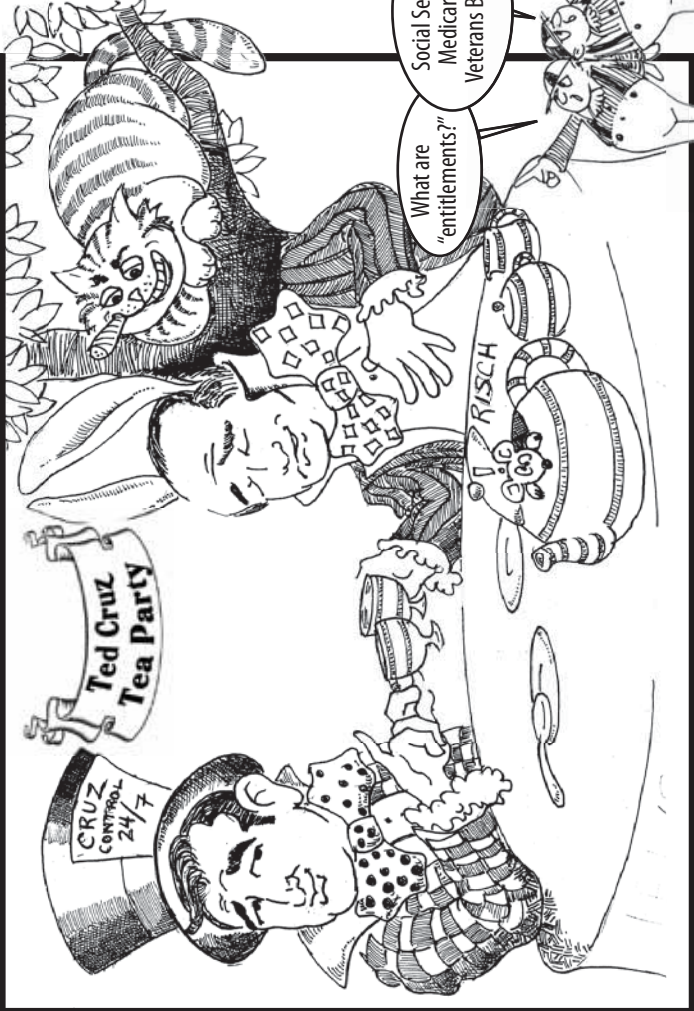
Jim Risch has tried to have it every which way on Social Security, Medicare and Veteran’s Benefits. But his record reveals where he really stands.

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Supporting documents are available on request from the Mitchell campaign

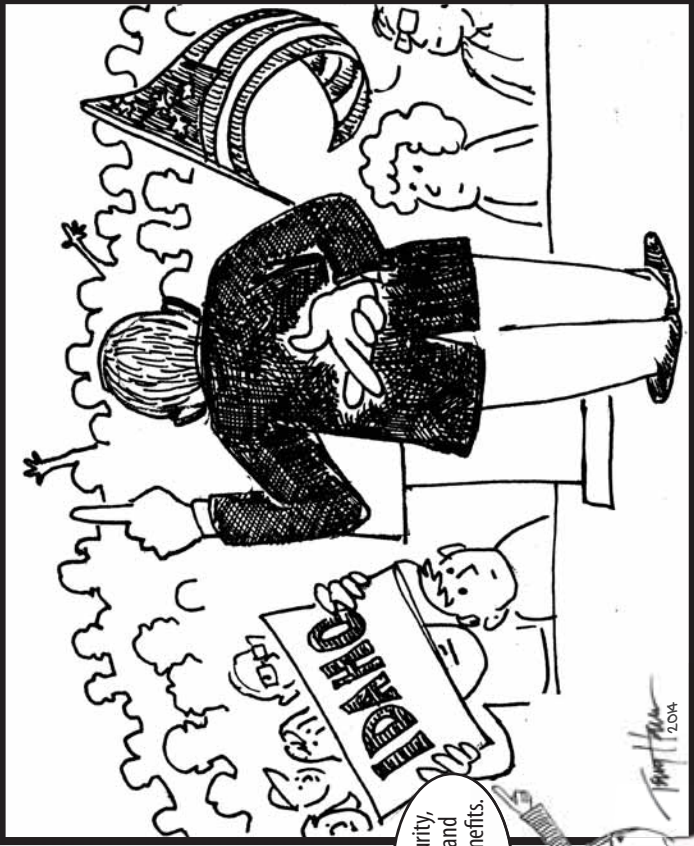


WHAT RISCH SAYS TO DONORS:



"You can take this to the bank – I'm going to have a perfect record when it comes to ... cutting entitlements." <sup>1</sup>

WHAT RISCH SAYS TO VOTERS:



"I don't support cuts to Social Security, Medicare or Veterans benefits." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Jim Risch's fundraising letter

<sup>2</sup> CDA Press article, Saturday, April 12, 2014, David Coles, Staff writer

May 1, 2014

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson  
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## **MITCHELL TAKES RISCH TO TASK FOR MINIMUM WAGE VOTE**

### **Calls Pay Hike “Fair and Reasonable”**

BOISE – U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell said today that he is “not surprised” at Jim Risch’s vote to torpedo a bill that would increase the minimum wage.

“Jim has a long history of ignoring the needs of hard-working people and siding with the rich and powerful,” Mitchell said.

He said Risch’s 40-year taxpayer-funded career has leaned heavily in favor of powerful special interests, like his early advocacy for Idaho Power over Idaho farmers. “It’s as if he doesn’t know or doesn’t care who’s paying his \$174,000 annual salary. There are more than 175,000 people in Idaho struggling to get by on the current \$7.25 per hour minimum wage. A fulltime minimum wage worker makes \$15,000 per year.”

Mitchell said the wage hike Risch voted against was “fair and reasonable,” and he called it “a matter of economic fairness.” There are an estimated 28 million minimum wage workers.

“The minimum wage is worth less today than it was in 1968,” Mitchell said. “In real terms, it’s about 25% less today than the early 1970s, and it’s not nearly enough to support a family,” Mitchell said.

Mitchell said the claim that the minimum wage affects mostly teenagers is a myth. “Only 20 percent of minimum wage workers are teens,” Mitchell said. “The majority are adults, many with families, and 60 percent of them are women.”

“A moderate hike in the minimum wage is not going to cost jobs,” Mitchell said. “In fact, the extra money circulating in the economy will have a positive effect across the board.”

Mitchell said the issue is far from dead, and he urged Risch and the other Senators to not turn their backs on the working poor. “Every day that goes by is a day spent in poverty for millions of workers,” Mitchell said. “Please, don’t let them wait any longer for economic fairness.”

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April 16, 2014

**CONTACT:** **Betty Richardson**  
**(208) 250-7088**

## **NELS MITCHELL SAYS RISCH NEEDS TO ADMIT HE MADE A BIG MISTAKE**

Boise - Nels Mitchell, who is running for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Jim Risch, today issued the following statement:

"Jim Risch's defense of his ill-considered tax shift in the Idaho Falls Post Register missed the mark. Yes, he promised Idaho voters that he had a magic elixir that would enable them to cut property taxes without hurting our public schools. And the voters believed him and sanctioned his scheme. But Risch was wrong.

Our public schools have not only been harmed, to the detriment of our children, but - in order to staunch the bleeding - Idahoans have had to increase their property taxes at the local school district level. That's not my idea of a tax cut. Risch misled the voters, and now he's blaming the voters for following him down the wrong path.

The fact is Risch's tax shift resulted in "have" and "have not" school districts. This violates the Idaho Constitutional mandate that the state provide a "general, uniform, and thorough" system of public schools. Risch has created an unconscionable and unconstitutional gap in opportunity among Idaho's students. And those living in the "have" districts, the people who have passed levies, raising their own taxes in an effort to keep their schools afloat, have saved little, if anything.

Finally, it bears repeating that Risch has never told us how much he has personally benefited over the years from his tax shift.

Risch offers evasive spin, but no transparency, and no apology. This is not the conduct of a leader, but the arrogance of a politician who thinks his record is beyond scrutiny. Idaho now ranks last in support for public education and many of our school districts can only afford to keep their doors open four days per week.

As I've said before, Risch's chickens are coming home to roost. And they look a lot like buzzards."

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April 8, 2014

**CONTACT:** **Betty Richardson**  
**(208) 250-7088**

## **NELS MITCHELL SUPPORTS FAIRNESS FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE**

BOISE - U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell today announced his support for the Paycheck Fairness Act and urged Congress to pass the legislation to "ensure that women receive fundamental fairness in the workplace."

Mitchell noted, "Today is Equal Pay Day, the day that symbolizes how far into the year women must work to make up the difference between what women made and what men made the previous year. It is a day that recognizes that women are an integral part of our nation's economy and deserve to receive equal pay for equal work."

Mitchell said that, by closing the unfair pay gap, the Paycheck Fairness Act would be "good for women, good for families and good for our economy. It is my hope that Congress will pass this legislation this year, but if not, when I am in the Senate, I will work to turn this bill into law."

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April 7, 2014

CONTACT: **Betty Richardson**  
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## MITCHELL DECRIES SUPREME COURT RULING ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE

### Former SEC Lawyer Urges Congress, SEC to Act

BOISE – It's time for Congress and the Securities and Exchange Commission to fix our broken campaign finance system, U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell said today.

The former SEC Senior Officer called on his opponent, Jim Risch, to support efforts to reinstate the limits on donations struck down by the court and requiring more disclosure of contributions, particularly by public corporations.

"First, Congress must tell the Supreme Court in no uncertain terms that corporations are not people," Mitchell said. "Then it must find a way to limit contributions that will not run afoul of the First Amendment. Finally, the SEC must use its authority to require the disclosures contemplated by the court in the Citizens United case four years ago."

"These three steps would go a long way toward fixing a system that's badly broken, and ensuring that the voices of average citizens are not drowned out by the wealthy and big corporations."

Mitchell said he was disappointed in the court's 5 to 4 ruling last Wednesday in *McCutcheon v. FEC*.

"By striking down the limit on the total amount an individual or corporation can give in each election cycle, the court rejected a reasonable restriction imposed by Congress to prevent corruption and influence-peddling," he said.

"This is the second time in four years that the court has attacked efforts to limit the influence of money in politics," Mitchell said. "We've seen what has happened in the four years since the *Citizens United* ruling: corporate political spending has skyrocketed, and the disclosures anticipated by the court have not come about. Unless action is taken now, we can expect Wednesday's ruling to have a similar effect in this next election cycle."

Noting that Republicans in Congress have blocked efforts to require disclosure, Mitchell urged his opponent to break with the party line in the interests of ordinary Idahoans.

"In the meantime, the SEC must use the authority it already has to require public corporations to disclose their political contributions," Mitchell said. "Investors and shareholders should be able to monitor such activities."

Mitchell said he has signed a petition circulated by Sen. Merkley of Oregon calling on the SEC to take action. "I urge everyone who believes in government transparency to sign that petition," he said.

<http://www.jeffmerkley.com/petition/disclose-the-big-money/>

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April 2, 2014

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson**

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**MITCHELL CHALLENGES RISCH ON SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE**

BOISE – Citing Risch’s recent fundraising letter that calls for cuts in entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare, challenger Nels Mitchell today called upon Jim Risch to tell Idahoans exactly which programs he would cut and how deep of cuts he would make.

“Risch’s rhetoric is irresponsible,” Mitchell said. “He’s either playing to the extreme right wing of his party for campaign contributions, or he really wants to destroy the financial security of seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities. Either way it’s flat-out wrong.”

Risch’s letter read in part, “You can take this to the bank – I’m going to have a perfect record when it comes to . . . cutting entitlements . . .”

“Risch seems to be trying to hide behind the code word ‘entitlements,’ but there’s no mistaking what he’s talking about – Social Security and Medicare – the most successful poverty-reducing programs of the last 100 years. We already know where he stands on helping veterans by his recent vote against legislation improving Veteran’s benefits.”

“Now that he’s on record as supporting cuts, Risch needs to tell Idahoans exactly where and how much he wants to cut these essential programs,” Mitchell said.

“We need to make these programs stronger for the long-term, not cut the heart out of them.”

Mitchell speculated that Risch might support ‘privatizing’ Social Security, which Mitchell called “a recipe for disaster.” But he said we’re in the dark until Risch is called to account for himself.

#####

March 23, 2014

*Please accept this Reader's View and/or political cartoon for publication.*

CONTACT: **Betty Richardson**  
[\(208\) 250-7088](tel:(208)250-7088)

## RISCH'S 'CHICKENS' COME HOME TO ROOST BY NELS MITCHELL

Jim Risch's proverbial chickens are coming home to roost, and the cost is high: a starving public school system that is neither uniform nor thorough and the lowest wages in the country.

The proverb goes back more than 500 years. At first it meant that, if you put a curse on someone, that curse would come back to haunt you. The poet Geoffrey Chaucer used the expression in his "Canterbury Tales" in 1390. Over the years its meaning expanded, until it came to mean what it does today: that one must face the consequences of his mistakes or misdeeds.

It's an expression for our times. In 2006, "fill-in" governor, Jim Risch led the charge to take the property tax base away from public schools, setting education in Idaho on a collision course with bankruptcy. Promises to replace the money were broken, and our schools took a \$50 million hit the first year, and bigger hits thereafter. Poorer districts and rural districts were hit especially hard.

Seven years later, our children are reaping the results: four-day weeks, larger classes, some of the best teachers lost to other states, fewer aides, fewer electives, fewer activities, outdated textbooks and technology, aging and unsafe buildings. Idaho is now dead last among the 50 states in its support for education. Even Republican Speaker of the House Scott Bedke calls it "unacceptable" that our students lag a year-and-a-half behind students in states that invest in public schools.

Ironically, Risch sold his scheme as a property tax cut (which raised the sales tax on the middle class), but it has actually *raised* property taxes for many Idahoans as desperate schools turned to override levies to keep their doors open. It used to be that override levies provided "extras" the district's budget wouldn't cover. Today, nearly four out of five districts depend on them for basic needs. The bill is \$190 million, triple what it used to be. It's a different world, but not a better one.

There can be little doubt that a sub-standard school system feeds directly into the economy by failing to provide a sufficient skilled workforce and by deterring businesses from relocating to Idaho.

The Twin Falls Times News recently summed it up: “Education Will Flounder Until 2006 Mistake Is Fixed.” “Our schools are failing, plain and simple,” it asserted. Noting that Risch still defends his 7-year-old mistake, they concluded, “[W]e can’t understand why.” “They call it the Dark Ages for a reason,” the paper concluded.

In a column headlined “The day Idaho should remember Jim Risch,” the Lewiston Tribune’s Marty Trillhasse detailed the woes of schools districts like Potlatch, where override levies fund 40% of the budget. Without them, the district would lose 25 people. Similar statistics haunt districts like Orofino, Snake River, Lakeland, Meridian and Nampa.

So why did Risch ram through his tax shift? Trillhasse doesn’t speculate but simply observes, “Wealthy landowners and corporations got a break. Poor people paid more sales taxes. And the financial foundation for public schools began to crumble.”

The legacy of the Jim Risch tax shift will be written in our struggling schools and in a more bleak future for our children. Risch’s “chickens” are coming home to roost, but they look a lot like buzzards.

#####





Golly, Mr. Risch those are mean looking chickens!

STATE OF IDAHO

IDAHO VOTER

GUY

TERRY HANSEN

March 13, 2014

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson  
(208) 250-7088**

**ON INL, RISCH TWEETS 'YES,' VOTES 'NO'**

BOISE – U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell today said Jim Risch is trying to mislead voters about his record on the Idaho National Laboratory, Idaho's second-largest employer.

In a Tweet Wednesday Risch said, "Idaho Falls civil leaders in today-great discussion on @INL issues. We are all pulling the wagon together and making progress- more to do."

"It's no thanks to Jim Risch that INL even *has* money this year," Mitchell said. "He can say what he likes now, but the fact is that he voted against the INL budget – the INL budget that Mike Simpson supported."

"He can pretend to be looking out for INL in 140 characters on Twitter, but it's his votes in the Senate that matter, and he voted against the interests of Idaho and thousands of Idahoans who work at the site and thousands more who depend on the site as a bulwark of the eastern Idaho economy.

"No amount of Tweeting before the election is going to change his record."

"It's just another example of Sen. Risch saying one thing in Idaho but doing something else in Washington," Mitchell said.

#####

March 3, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson**

**208-250-7088**

## Nels Mitchell Says Risch Response Missed the Mark

Sometimes silence speaks volumes.

Last week, I issued a press release reminding Idaho voters that “fill-in” governor Risch’s 2006 tax shift – swapping property tax funding for an increase in the sales tax – seriously hurt our public schools.

Risch didn’t deny it.

I reminded voters that Risch’s scheme mostly benefited big corporations, wealthy Idahoans, and out-of-state landowners.

Risch didn’t deny it.

I pointed out that this year, 94 school districts are relying on override levies to compensate for the state underfunding public schools.

Once again, Risch didn’t deny it.

What did Risch say in response to my release? He replied only that the legislature and voters sanctioned his course of action and that he personally didn’t get as large a tax break as his former opponent said he did. (See Idaho Statesman blog posting of [March 7, 2014, by Dan Popkey](#)).

Okay. But we know more now than we did in 2006 and 2008. We know that the Risch tax shift has been identified as forever changing the way public education is funded – to the detriment of our children.

We also know that Risch was among the wealthy who benefited financially from his tax shift. We don’t know the exact dollar amount, but we would like to know. After all, the savings have been cumulative. I asked him to provide an update. He didn’t.

Risch is shrewd. He knows how to deflect attention from what matters most. When it comes to Risch’s tax shift, what matters most is not the amount he personally saved in taxes, though that would be of interest.

What matters most is the fact that Risch led the legislature and the voters down the wrong path on public school funding. What matters most is the continuing damage to our public schools and our kids’ education.

And, on those points, Risch’s silence is deafening.

March 3, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson**  
**[208-250-7088](tel:208-250-7088)**

## **MITCHELL SAYS RISCH RESPONSIBLE FOR IDAHO SCHOOLS' 'RACE TO THE BOTTOM'**

BOISE -- As the Idaho Legislature struggles to set education funding, U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell says Idahoans would do well to remember the root cause of today's misery at the Statehouse, in our classrooms, and at the polls as voters face override levies.

"During his seven months as fill-in governor, Jim Risch did more damage to Idaho's public schools than all of the legislature's inadequate budgets put together," Mitchell said today. "He started the 'race to the bottom' in our schools, and he owes an apology to the people of Idaho."

"In 2006, Risch sold the legislature on a wrong-headed plan to swap public schools' property tax funding for an increase in the sales tax," Mitchell said. "He promised us schools wouldn't lose money. The fact is, they lost big -- \$50 million in one fell swoop, and that was just the beginning."

"Jim Risch pulled the rug out from under our children's schools and started a decline that has sent Idaho's support for education to the absolute bottom of the barrel -- 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation." Mitchell said.

Mitchell said Risch's scheme raised the sales tax by a penny, which impacted all Idaho families, while the concurrent property tax cut mostly benefited big corporations, wealthy Idahoans and out-of-state landowners. They got hefty breaks while Idaho families paid more in sales tax and often more in property tax as well because of override levies.

This year, 94 school districts are relying on override levies. “Those taxpayers can thank Jim Risch,” Mitchell said.

“Risch claimed he wouldn’t benefit personally from the shift, and even said he’d drop out if he did,” Mitchell said. “Today I challenge him to tell the public exactly how much he’s saved.”

Mitchell said the state’s media has called Risch out on the disastrous effects of his governorship on Idaho’s school children.

“Educational funding is broken in Idaho,” the Twin Falls Times News editorialized on January 12, “and students, teachers and taxpayers are all getting railroaded.” The paper called Risch’s tax shift “wrong-headed” and “unsound,” and said it has made supplemental levies “an annual backdoor tax.”

On October 2, 2013, the Idaho State Journal wrote of the tax shift that Risch sold to lawmakers, “Idahoans can look back on a single-day session of the Idaho Legislature held to forever change the way public education (is) funded in this state.” “At the end of the day,” the paper said, “the tax breaks . . . went to Idaho’s largest landowners. Idaho’s public education system . . . went begging.”

“The future of our state lies in our public education system,” Mitchell said. “I challenge Mr. Risch to not only tell Idahoans how much he has saved, but also to apologize for his disastrous scheme.”

#####

February 28, 2014

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## RISCH DESERTS IDAHO VETERANS

BOISE – U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell took his opponent to task for voting against increased benefits for the nation’s 22 million veterans and their families.

Senate Republicans, including Risch, used a procedural move Thursday to block a bill that would have provided \$21 billion for medical, education and job-training benefits.

Noting Risch’s votes for tax breaks for millionaires and large corporations, Mitchell said the one-term senator has his priorities wrong.

“He’s gotten caught up in the Beltway lifestyle and lost touch with Idahoans,” Mitchell said. “Otherwise he would understand that we’re a state of veterans and ordinary families, not a state of zillionaires. I don’t know who Jim Risch is serving, but it’s clearly not Idaho.”

Mitchell said his father was a World War II veteran who saw combat in the Pacific.

“Every time I think about what these men and women go through to protect us, I am grateful for their service and sacrifices,” he said. “The least we can do is to ease their transition back into American society.”

Among other things, the bill Risch voted against would have:

- Eased the backlog of 390,000 benefit claims that have been waiting action for more than 125 days.
- Made more Idaho veterans eligible for in-state college tuition.
- Provided adoption services for combat veterans whose injuries left them unable to conceive.
- Improved benefits for spouses of deceased veterans and relatives caring for wounded veterans.

“Nobody should have to wait more than four months to have their claims decided, nor should wounded warriors be left without families because they can’t afford adoption,” Mitchell said. “That seems obvious to me, but it clearly isn’t to Jim Risch.”

#####

January 14, 2014

## BOISEAN NELS MITCHELL ANNOUNCES FOR U.S. SENATE AGAINST RISCH

### Blames “Career Politicians” for Gridlock and Dysfunction

BOISE – Vowing to replace a career politician who serves his own interests with a citizen legislator who will serve the people of Idaho, Boisean Nels Mitchell this morning announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Jim Risch.

Mitchell made the announcement in front of a crowd of supporters on the terrace of the Train Depot in Boise. He vowed to make good jobs his number one priority.

Noting that Risch has held public office for almost 40 years, Mitchell said the Founding Fathers never envisioned career politicians running Washington.

“They conceived of a Senate in which citizen legislators would step forward to serve their country for a limited time before returning to their private lives..” Mitchell said. “For that reason, I will run for one term and one term only.”

“I am not a politician. I have had a successful career, and it is now my turn to step up,” Mitchell said. “Six years is a long time. During that time, I will work as hard as I possibly can to represent Idaho and its people with energy, purpose and integrity. I will be beholden to nobody but the people of Idaho.”

Mitchell said the gridlock in Washington can be addressed. “I do not believe, as Sen. Risch does, that it’s impossible to accomplish anything in the Senate,” he said. If that’s the case, why do we pay him? I commit to you that I won’t make excuses and I won’t take junkets. No excuses, no junkets, period.”

Mitchell said that, after jobs and the economy, he would focus on protecting Idahoans’ right to hunt, fish and recreate on public lands. “Our public lands belong to all of us, and they should not be turned over to the state where they could be put up for sale.”

Mitchell also said he would work with Rep. Mike Simpson to ensure funding for the Idaho National Laboratory and to protect the Boulder White Clouds, and, unlike Sen. Risch, would be a strong supporter of the Violence Against Women Act.

Mitchell said the 2014 election will be pivotal. “In 2014, we the people must reclaim the U.S. Senate from the control of career politicians. It is not too late for the United States Senate to reestablish credibility and restore the confidence of the American people.”

#####

January 15, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Betty Richardson

208-250-7088

## NELS MITCHELL BLASTS RISCH APPEAL FOR CAMPAIGN MONEY

### Says the 2014 election is about Risch's record

BOISE – Responding to an internet fundraising appeal sent by Sen. Jim Risch, Nels Mitchell, Risch's Democratic challenger, today issued the following statement:

“Jim Risch seems to think his re-election is about Nevada Senator Harry Reid – it's not. But that kind of thinking does prove how out of touch he has become. The U.S. Senate race in Idaho in 2014 is really about Jim Risch and his record – or lack thereof.

I said when I announced yesterday that I'll go back to Washington and work for Idaho. I won't be an automatic vote for anyone or anything, unlike Mr. Risch who shields his lack of accomplishment in the Senate by voting NO on virtually everything and by offering no real solutions of his own. In particular, he has done nothing to promote job growth in Idaho.

Unlike Mr. Risch, I won't cast silly votes to shutdown our government; I won't use budget blackmail to harm Mountain Home Air Force Base or the INL, and I won't concentrate on Syria and Kazakhstan at the expense of Kootenai or Canyon County.

This election is about the record of a life-long politician who has held elected office for nearly 40 years and, in an entire term in the U.S. Senate, has not one major thing to show as an accomplishment for Idaho's families. The only desperation here is Mr. Risch's as he struggles to hold on to the job that pays him \$174,000, one he recently said was so easy he could do it permanently.

In that same interview, Mr. Risch said nothing ever happens in Congress, but he still loves his job. That is not my vision for a United States Senator. Idaho's senators should work as hard as the people who elect them.

Idaho needs a Senator who will work hard every day for the state and its people, not one who, like Mr. Risch, only plays partisan games and who seems content to have a good time on the public's dime.”

Please see attached fundraising appeal.



# NELS MITCHELL

FOR UNITED STATES SENATE

[www.nelsmitchellforidahoh.com](http://www.nelsmitchellforidahoh.com)

PAID FOR BY NELS MITCHELL FOR IDAHO

January 17, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Betty Richardson  
208-250-7088

## SENATE CHALLENGER NELS MITCHELL CHARGES RISCH WITH HYPOCRISY

### Says Risch Record on PILT is one of opposition, not support

BOISE – Nels Mitchell, who is running against Sen. Jim Risch in the 2014 election, today blasted Risch for his hypocrisy on funding for federal Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) to Idaho counties. PILT funds are Federal payments to local governments that help offset losses in property taxes due to non-taxable Federal lands within their boundaries. Mitchell said Risch’s claim that he voted against a recent funding bill in part because of its failure to fully fund PILT is “absolutely phony.”

Mitchell said, “These funds are critical to many rural communities, and – in an election year – Senator Risch is playing politics with this issue. He boasts that he is a strong supporter of PILT funding and opposed the omnibus funding bill in part because it failed to include PILT funding. But his voting record tells a different story,” said Mitchell. “In fact, Senator Risch has a long history of actually opposing any legitimate effort to extend PILT funding for Idaho counties. He is constantly among a small minority of Senators who vote against any, and every, attempt to find common ground and support rural communities.”

Mitchell pointed out that every successful effort to extend PILT funding in the past several years succeeded in the face of Risch’s opposition. Risch’s actions include:

- Two years ago, PILT funding was extended for an additional year as part of the federal Transportation Authorization legislation. Senator Risch voted NO.
- Just last month, Senator Risch voted NO on the House and Senate budget agreement. Instead, he supported a Continuing Resolution, which, at the time of his vote, he knew would have precluded any opportunity to extend PILT funding.
- Even if the Omnibus Appropriations Bill had included PILT funding, Senator Risch’s voting history and comments in opposition to the bill demonstrate that he still would have voted NO.
- While Risch was not in the senate at the time, PILT funding was extended for four years as part of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), which Senator

Risch made clear he would have opposed. The extension of PILT funding through TARP was supported at the time by Idaho Senator Larry Craig and Congressman Mike Simpson.

- Press and Congressional reports indicate that PILT funding will likely be extended as part of the Farm Bill which could come before the Senate for a vote in the next few weeks. Last year, Senator Risch voted against the Senate version of the Farm Bill. His voting history suggests he will likely vote against it again, regardless of whether or not it funds PILT.

“Senator Risch would like Idaho’s rural counties to believe that he is on their side. He is not. In fact, Risch has been indifferent to the plight of rural counties. He wants to save his own political skin and avoid a primary challenge – no matter the impact on Idaho counties, the Idaho National Laboratory, and our nation’s economy.

Mitchell said he would make very different choices in the Senate – including putting Idaho’s rural counties ahead of political considerations. “If I am fortunate enough to be elected to Senate, I’ll seek a path different from that of Senator Risch,” Mitchell said. “Unlike Senator Risch, I’ll work with senators of all political persuasions to make our federal government more responsive and more responsible. I won’t give our rural communities lip service in an election year. I’ll be a true advocate for their concerns throughout my six year term.”

#####

January 23, 2014

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Betty Richardson  
208-250-7088**

## **INL Needs Solid Support, Not Fair-Weather Friends**

*Boise*—To folks in eastern Idaho, it goes without saying that the Idaho National Laboratory is one of the primary economic drivers in the region. A 2010 study by three Boise State University economists found that the site is responsible for more than 20,000 jobs – 25 percent of total regional employment. It generates \$2.75 *billion* in economic output, and increases personal income by \$1.9 *billion*.

Statewide, the INL is Idaho's second-largest employer, and accounts for a hefty 6.5 percent of the state's total economic output. It's hard to argue with numbers like that. Or to imagine where Idaho would be without it.

For many years, there was a consensus in Idaho politics that congressional support for the site was a given. INL is not some pork-barrel project that creates a few jobs back home; it is the economic foundation of an entire region, a major contributor to Idaho's well-being, and a lynchpin in America's energy security.

Now, things are changing – and not for the better. My opponent, incumbent Sen. Jim Risch, voted against the bi-partisan budget bill that passed the Senate 72-26. Had that bill failed, INL funding would have been threatened. Had I been in the U.S. Senate, I would have joined Congressman Mike Simpson who fought to stabilize, and even increase, funding for INL after two very uncertain years.

Sen. Risch acted irresponsibly in casting his “no” vote on the bi-partisan budget bill. Idaho cannot afford ANY cracks in our historically united front in support of the INL. We dodged the bullet this time, but Sen. Risch has shown us he will not put his constituents first, no matter the spin he uses to justify his wrong vote.

Idaho now ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation for its percent of minimum wage jobs. That is not the economy we want for our kids. INL jobs are *good* jobs – they pay well, they come with benefits, and they offer training and chances for advancement. Those are the kinds of jobs we need.

As your U.S. Senator, I pledge to stand with the INL *every single time*. I will work across the aisle to protect and enhance its funding, and, unlike Sen. Risch, I will *never* cast a vote that threatens its future.

###

# NELS MITCHELL

FOR UNITED STATES SENATE

[www.nelsmitchellforidaho.com](http://www.nelsmitchellforidaho.com)

PAID FOR BY NELS MITCHELL FOR IDAHO

February 7, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Betty Richardson  
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Jean McNeil  
208-383-0401

## 'SENATOR NO' STRIKES AGAIN

### Mitchell Says Risch Is Running Away from his Record

BOISE – U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell said today he's not surprised Jim Risch is touting his dubious achievement as the most obstructionist senator in Washington. "He's running away from his record," Mitchell said.

"Risch has turned into 'Senator No,' and his negativism is hurting Idaho," Mitchell said. "When he votes against funding for INL, against protecting women from violence, against payments to Idaho's rural counties, he's voting against Idahoans."

"Jim Risch wants to run as the anti-everything candidate because he has a dismal record of working for Idaho," Mitchell said. "It's no wonder he says it doesn't matter if he's on the job or not, because when you vote the way he does, it really doesn't."

"It's easy to vote 'no' when you're on the extreme fringe and your vote doesn't count," he said. "What's harder is to roll up your sleeves and get to work for Idaho. That's what I'll do."

"Instead of bragging about how far right he is, Jim Risch should apologize to the people of Idaho for wasting their time and money doing little but enjoying the perks of office and promoting gridlock and dysfunction," Mitchell said.

"It's time for Jim Risch to stop posing at our expense. He should retire – but not on the taxpayer's dime," Mitchell said.

#####



**NELS MITCHELL**

★ FOR UNITED STATES SENATE

[www.nelsmitchellforidaho.com](http://www.nelsmitchellforidaho.com)

**MEDIA COVERAGE**

# Higher pay sought

DAVID COLE/dcole@cdapress.com | Posted: Tuesday, July 29, 2014 12:00 am

COEUR d'ALENE - U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell and House candidate Shirley Ringo believe a major disconnect exists when it comes to the issue of minimum wage.

Idaho's all-Republican congressional delegation and Republican majority in the state Legislature oppose an increase of the minimum wage. Meanwhile, a majority of the public supports additional pay for the state's lowest-wage workers, Mitchell and Ringo, both Democrats, said Monday.

The two were in Coeur d'Alene campaigning together, organizing what they called a "Living Wage Rally" at Riverstone Park. They also appeared earlier in the day together in Lewiston for a rally, and made appearances throughout the state on earlier dates.

"There's a huge disconnect," Mitchell said in an interview. "As I'm traveling around the state, what I hear is people don't like what's going on in Boise and they don't like what's going on in Washington, D.C."

There is currently a proposal in Washington, D.C., to increase the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$10.10.

"If and when Shirley and I are back in Washington, D.C., we will support that wholeheartedly," said Mitchell, who is seeking to replace Republican U.S. Sen. Jim Risch.

If that federal proposal was approved, it would increase the wages of 176,000 Idahoans, Mitchell said.

"The average age of the minimum wage worker is 35 years old," Mitchell told the audience in Coeur d'Alene.

More than 25 percent of minimum wage workers are parents, he said.

Neighboring states have raised their minimum wage rates and didn't lose jobs as a result, Mitchell said.

"If you look at any of the economic studies, the states that have raised the minimum wage have not lost jobs," Mitchell said.



## Higher pay sought

U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell, left, and U.S. Congress candidate Shirley Ringo speak to supporters about increasing Idaho's minimum wage during a campaign stop Monday at Riverstone Park in Coeur d'Alene.

"If your business plan involves somebody living in poverty so that you can make a go of it (in business) there's probably something wrong with it," said Ringo, who has been a state legislator from Moscow for 14 years, and is running against incumbent Congressman Raul Labrador.

In an interview after the rally, Ringo said greed is ruining the country.

Idaho's elected officials, primarily the Republican majority, are more influenced by lobbyists and business interest groups than the lower- and middle-class working public and voters, Ringo said. She said Idaho legislators are afraid to lose their seats if business interests turn against them for supporting higher wages.

"We really don't need to worry about that if we get it done on the federal level," Ringo said. "Sometimes for Idaho that's the solution."

The two argued that increasing the minimum wage means local businesses will have more customers who spend more money and more people will be independent of public assistance.

The two will need people who earn the low wages to get out and vote in November if they have a chance of winning this fall, they said.

Mitchell, of Boise, has been a practicing attorney for more than 30 years in both the public and private sectors.

Fifteen people attended the Democrats' rally.

# Idahostatesman.com

## POPKEY ON POLITICS BY DAN POPKEY

### Democrats to hold 'Living Wage Rally' Thursday in Caldwell

Posted by Dan Popkey on July 9, 2014

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google Plus](#) [Reddit](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#)

Two congressional and one statewide candidate will be on hand.

Democratic congressional candidates Nels Mitchell and state Rep. Shirley Ringo will join treasurer nominee Deborah Silver and local Democratic candidates at a "Living Wage Rally" Thursday at noon in Caldwell.

Mitchell faces GOP Sen. Jim Risch in the Nov. 4 general election; Ringo is challenging GOP Congressman Raul Labrador; and Silver faces Republican Treasurer Ron Crane.

Mitchell, a first-time candidate, has made the living wage issue a [theme of his campaign](#).

The rally will be held in Caldwell's Gazebo, at Blaine Street and 7th Avenue. The public is invited.

#### A news release follows:

Press Advisory

For Immediate Release Contact: Betty Richardson - 208.250.7088 | Stacy Ringo - 206.679.5665

U.S. Senate candidate Nels Mitchell, U.S. House candidate Shirley Ringo and State Treasurer candidate Deborah Silver will speak at a Living Wage Rally at noon this Thursday, July 10, in Caldwell at the Gazebo at Blaine St and 7th Ave.

Mitchell, Ringo and Silver, all Idaho Democrats, will also be joined by local candidates.

The purpose of the rally is to raise awareness about the need to make the federal minimum wage a living wage.

The public is invited.

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google Plus](#) [Reddit](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#)

### Join The Conversation

Idaho Statesman is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

[Commenting FAQs](#) | [Terms of Service](#)



# Legals Legals Legals

## PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO PROPOSE OR PROMULGATE NEW OR CHANGED AGENCY RULES

The following agencies of the state of Idaho have published the complete text and all related, pertinent information concerning their intent to change or make the following rules in the latest publication of the state Administrative Bulletin.

*The written comment submission deadline is July 23, 2014 unless otherwise noted.*

*Public hearing request deadline is July 16, 2014 unless otherwise noted.*

*(Temp & Prop) indicates the rulemaking is both Temporary and Proposed.*

*(\*PH) indicates that a public hearing has been scheduled.*

### IDAPA 02 – DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**PO Box 790, Boise, ID 83701**  
**02.02.14 - Rules for Weights and Measures**

**02-0214-1401**, Incorporates by reference the 2015 edition of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Handbook 44, specifications, tolerances, and other technical requirements for weighing and measuring devices.

**02-0214-1402**, Clarifies pump labeling requirements for ethanol blends in oxygenated gasoline that are 10% or less.

### IDAPA 16 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

**PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0036**

**16-0102-1401**, *Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - Rule Definitions*. (Temp & Prop) Amends the definition "Emergency Medical Services or EMS" to align it with the amendment to 56-1012, Idaho Code.

**\*16-0310-1401**, *Medicare Enhanced Plan Benefits*. (Temp & Prop) (\*PH) Aligns rule to statutory changes that restore Medicaid benefits for dental services that reflect evidence-based practice for adults with disabilities and special health needs and allows developmental disability budget modifications for community-supported employment.

**16-0506-1401**, *Criminal History and Background Checks*. (Temp & Prop) Adds references and amends classes of

*tion Against Invasive Species Sticker Rules*. (Temp & Prop) Changes terminology to clarify and distinguish between the IDPR recreational registrations and the ITD vehicle registrations.

**26-0136-1401**, *Rules Governing the Winter Recreational Parking Permit Program*. (Temp & Prop) Changes terminology to clarify and distinguish between the IDPR recreational registrations and the ITD vehicle registrations.

### IDAPA 38 – DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

**PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0013**

**38-0404-1401**, *Rules Governing Capitol Mall Parking*. (Temp & Prop) Provides for the utilization and management of the new State parking garage; clarifies eligibility requirements for specific permits; defines legislative parking and Capitol Annex visitor parking; increases percentage of reserved parking spaces; increases monthly parking fees to fund the maintenance and security of new parking garage.

### IDAPA 59 – PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF IDAHO (PERSI)

**PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0078**

**59-0106-1401**, *PERSI Retirement Rules*. (Temp & Prop) Clarifies provisions regarding "retirement in place" for small board and commissions members by providing that they must be eligible to retire and be age 62 or over in order to qualify to retire in place.

**59-0201-1401**, *Rules for the Judges' Retirement Fund*. (Temp & Prop) (New Chapter) Establishes the procedures for the administration of the judges' retirement fund.

### NOTICES OF INTENT TO PROMULGATE - NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING

### IDAPA 02 – DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**02-0214-1403**, Rules for Weights and Measures

**02-0421-1402**, Rules Governing Importation of Animals

**02-0424-1401**, Rules Governing Tuberculosis

**02-0428-1401**, Rules Governing Livestock Dealers, Buying Stations, and Livestock Trader Lots

**\*02-0627-1402**, Rules Governing Bacterial Ring Rot Caused by (*Clavibacter michiganensis*

### DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

**18-0125-1401**, Title Insurance and Title Insurance Agents and Escrow Officers

**18-0144-1401**, Schedule of Fees, Licenses, and Miscellaneous Charges

**18-0146-1401**, Recognition of New Annuity Mortality Tables for Use in Determining Reserve

Liabilities for Annuities and Pure Endowment Contracts

**18-0153-1401**, Continuing Education

**18-0156-1401**, Rebates and Illegal Inducements to Obtaining Title Insurance Business

### IDAPA 19 – IDAHO STATE BOARD OF DENTISTRY

**19-0101-1401**, Rules of the Idaho State Board of Dentistry

### IDAPA 20 – IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

**20-0316-1401**, Rules Governing Oil and Gas Leasing on Idaho State Lands

### IDAPA 27 – IDAHO BOARD OF PHARMACY

**27-0101-1401**, Rules of the Idaho Board of Pharmacy

### IDAPA 35 – STATE TAX COMMISSION

**35-0102-1403**, Idaho Sales and Use Tax Administrative Rules

Please refer to the Idaho Administrative Bulletin, **July 2, 2014, Volume 14-7**, for the notices and text of all rulemakings, public hearings schedules, information on negotiated rulemakings, executive orders of the Governor, and agency contact information.

*Issues of the Idaho Administrative Bulletin can be viewed at [www.admin-rules.idaho.gov/](http://www.admin-rules.idaho.gov/)*

Office of the Administrative Rules Coordinator, Dept. of Administration, PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0306  
Phone: 208-332-1820; Fax: 334-2307; Email: [rulescoordinator@adm.idaho.gov](mailto:rulescoordinator@adm.idaho.gov)  
**7-03-14c**

### CLEARWATER COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION AGENDA

**Monday, July 21, 2014, at 6:30 p.m.**

*Courtroom 1 in the Clearwater County Courthouse  
150 Michigan Avenue,  
Orofino, Idaho*

Notice is hereby given that the Clearwater County Plan-

# Clearwater County welcome Nels candidate for U.S.

By Elizabeth Morgan

Since Boise Democrat and Attorney Nels Mitchell announced his candidacy for U.S. Senator against incumbent Jim Risch, he has campaigned throughout the state, giving Idahoans much to think about when they go to the polls this November. Mitchell has closed his law practice to campaign for the office full time and paid a visit to Orofino last week, offering voters in the county a chance to get better acquainted.

Mitchell, 60, said he would serve a single six-year term if elected. "I will be beholden to no one but the people of Idaho. I run to replace a career politician with a citizen legislator. I run to restore the vision of our founding fathers. Our Republic is best served when new leaders step forward, serve for a time and then step aside to let the next generation of leaders step up to the plate.

Briane "Nels" Mitchell was born in Seattle and raised in Idaho. Mitchell and his two brothers attended Boise public schools and all three graduated from Boise High School. At Boise High, Mitchell was Student Body President and a member of the Debate Team – the same path as his boyhood hero, Sen. Frank Church.

Upon graduating from Boise High School, Mitchell was offered an achievement scholarship to Columbia University. At Columbia, he served as class vice president, earned two varsity athletic letters, and graduated in three years so he could come home to Idaho. He won a scholarship to the University of Idaho Law School, and was delighted that he could be there at the same time as his brothers.

Mitchell has been a practicing attorney for more than 30 years, in both the public and private sectors. After graduating from law school, he clerked for Judge J. Blaine Anderson, who was nominated to the federal bench by Sen. Jim



**Nels Mitchell, Democrat, paid a visit to Clearwater County last week. He is a candidate for U.S. Senator in the November election.**

staff of 75 employees investigating and prosecuting financial fraud in western states.

Mitchell served six years on the University of Idaho Law School Advisory Council, and has been a part-time teacher at the University of Idaho Law School for 10 years. He has served on committees for Columbia University, the American Bar Association, and the U.S. State Department.

### Important issues

With information revealed about the candidate's family, education and career, let's take a look at where he stands on various issues, beginning with education.

"We need to give our kids every opportunity to succeed – and that means starting at a young age, continuing our curriculum through high school, and then on to college."

# Mitchell OK with Risch calling him a 'Democrat agent,' Balukoff gives Rep. Erpelding a summer job

Posted by Dan Popkey on July 8, 2014 Updated 6 hours ago

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Boise lawyer Nels Mitchell announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate to challenge GOP Sen. Jim Risch in January at the Boise Depot.

DARIN OSWALD — [doswald@idahostatesman.com](mailto:doswald@idahostatesman.com) [Buy Photo](#)

Fresh news releases from Idaho Democrats aiming to unseat favored Idaho GOP incumbents.

The dog days of summer have arrived for Democrats working to gain attention in their effort to unseat two top dogs of the Idaho GOP establishment — U.S. Sen. Jim Risch and Gov. Butch Otter.

Senate challenger Nels Mitchell on Monday issued a critique of a recent Risch fundraising letter, in which Mitchell ultimately comes to terms with [Risch calling him a "Democrat agent."](#)

Mitchell allows that he first considered "agent" a loaded word, but on second thought decided he was just fine being an advocate for "tens of thousands of Idaho voters who need friends in high places."

"I will be an 'agent' of those rank and file citizens — senior citizens, veterans, hardworking families struggling to make ends meet — who need a fighting chance against the high, the mighty and the soon-to-be-retired senator from Idaho," writes Mitchell.

Mitchell concludes his essay, "I am Agent Nels Mitchell and I am at your service."

Meanwhile, Democratic gubernatorial nominee A.J. Balukoff, announced on Fourth of July eve that Rep. Mat Erpelding, D-Boise, will be filling in as his communications director while his top spokesman, Mike Lanza, is away for the month of July.

"As a former college instructor, Mat has seen firsthand the negative implications of Idaho's underfunded public education system," Balukoff said in a news release. "Idaho colleges and universities have struggled under Gov. Otter, and Idahoans want our state to invest in education. And, as someone who worked to oppose the flawed Luna Laws, Mat understands that concern. I welcome his expertise."

**The news releases follow.**

**Mitchell:**

A MESSAGE FROM NELS MITCHELL IN RESPONSE TO RISCH FUNDRAISING EMAIL

Recently, a friend shared with me the latest internet fundraising appeal sent out by my opponent, Senator Risch. Risch's solicitation was full of unfounded assumptions and half-truths, but what most surprised - even amused - me was the fact that he was all excited because Idaho Democrats have sent an "agent" to oppose him.

"They've put up one of their Democratic agents to run against me," he complained.

Agent? In some campaigns I could mention, that's called a loaded word.

You might call someone who has the gall to oppose a self-important incumbent a "candidate," or an "opponent" or even "the Democratic nominee."

But an agent?

On second thought, though, my opponent - "the Republican agent" - might be on to something in a narrow-minded and backward kind of way.

Wikipedia, that fountain of knowledge on the Internet, defines "agent" this way:

"An agent is one who acts for, or in the place of another...one entrusted with the business of another."

Boldly speaking for the senator as well as for myself, we are both agents in that sense. Just as the senator is an official agent of the Idaho Republican Party, I am proud to be an agent - more often called a nominee - of the Idaho Democratic Party. Voters gave me that honor and responsibility in the May primary, and I take it very seriously.

The difference, of course, is on whose behalf we act.

Risch aligns himself with special interests and their lobbyist --those powerful people who require agents like Risch to help them dominate the government for their own lop-sided benefit. Some of the special interest Political Action Committees that have written large checks to Risch's campaign include those affiliated with Koch Industries, Halliburton, RJ Reynolds, Occidental Petroleum, Marathon Oil, Credit Suisse, and JP Morgan, to name just a few.

I, on the other hand, will be an advocate for the tens of thousands of Idaho voters who need friends in high places. I will be an "agent" of those rank and file citizens -- seniors, veterans, hardworking families struggling to make ends meet -- who need a fighting chance against the high, the mighty and the soon-to-be-retired senator from Idaho.

The Democratic voters of Idaho have already done me the great service of making me their agent. Now I welcome the opportunity to broaden that assignment, to be the agent for all the people of Idaho.

I am Agent Nels Mitchell and I am at your service.

**Balukoff:**

REPRESENTATIVE MAT ERPELDING JOINS BALUKOFF CAMPAIGN AS INTERIM COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

BOISE, Idaho - Democratic candidate for governor A.J. Balukoff has hired Rep. Mat Erpelding, a former legislative staffer, college educator, author and high altitude climbing guide, to be his campaign's interim communication director.

"As a former college instructor, Mat has seen firsthand the negative implications of Idaho's underfunded public education system," Balukoff said. "Idaho colleges and universities have struggled under Gov. Otter, and Idahoans want our state to invest in education. And, as someone who worked to oppose the flawed Luna Laws, Mat understands that concern. I welcome his expertise."

"I care deeply for Idaho," Erpelding said. "A.J.'s success as a business leader and as an educational leader has been phenomenal, and he is needed in our Capitol. A.J. will bring balance and prosperity back to Idaho, and I am proud to work toward his election."

Erpelding will serve as the primary media contact until the end of July while the campaign's communication director Mike Lanza is on leave.

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## Join The Conversation

Idaho Statesman is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

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# Democratic candidates fight for minimum wage hike

By Kendra Evensen kevensen@journalnet.com | Posted: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 11:18 pm

It can be difficult to win a political race as a Democrat in the staunchly Republican state of Idaho, but three Democratic candidates believe their efforts to listen to and fight for the needs of citizens in this state could help them do just that.

Richard Stallings, who is running for U.S. Representative District 2, Bert Marley, who is seeking the Lieutenant Governor seat, and Nels Mitchell, who is running for U.S. Senator, want to raise minimum wage.



ISJ logo

“We are initiating a fight to help folks making minimum wage,” Stallings said Tuesday, adding that he feels it’s wrong for people to try and get by with \$7.25 an hour when Congress could easily raise the minimum wage and give them a better quality of life.

Stallings, Marley and Mitchell have joined local and legislative candidates in support of the non-partisan Raising the Minimum Wage campaign. They attended press conferences in Pocatello, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls and Boise on Tuesday as part of the cause.

Although Stallings and Marley say they realize that some people think raising the minimum wage would be a bad idea because it could put extra stress on businesses or cause employers to lay off workers, they don’t think that will happen.

Stallings said it’s more likely that the only job people will lose is the one they quit when they no longer have to work two jobs to make ends meet. And if they do quit their second job, it could actually create more job opportunities, he said. People will also have more money to spend so businesses will likely benefit, too.

“There’s not one downside. Everybody’s a winner,” Stallings said.

Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 would give workers a roughly \$5,000 raise, he said.

Although that won’t solve all of minimum wage workers’ financial woes, it will make things a little easier for them, Marley said.

“It would be a huge help, there’s no question about that,” he said.

Marley said many couples and single parents have to work multiple jobs to provide for their families, and important things, like spending time with their children, get sacrificed as a result. He thinks Congress needs to do a better job of keeping the minimum wage in sync with inflation.

“If you can’t make a living working 40 hours a week, something is inherently wrong with the system,” Marley said.

Stallings lambasted some elected Republicans, whom he accuses of putting party affiliations and their own desires ahead of the needs of citizens by voting against measures like increasing the minimum wage. Recent infighting within the state Republican Party only illustrates that Republicans are more interested in their personal beliefs than peoples needs, he said.

Marley agrees.

“They’re more concerned about who is in control than (they are about) making things better for Idahoans ...,” he said.

Stallings hopes the Democratic candidates’ fight for changes including a higher minimum wage will help them secure votes in the November election.

“I think this will be a major turning point in Idaho politics,” he said.



Tuesday July 29, 2014



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## Guest column: Fundamental fairness

June 28, 2014

Idahoans voting in November should remember who supports raising the minimum wage and who does not, writes Nels Mitchell.

By Nels Mitchell

The minimum wage should be a living wage. This is a matter of fundamental fairness and economic justice. By setting the minimum wage, Congress can prevent wages from dropping to poverty levels. A person who works full time should not need to rely on public assistance.

In past years, Congress increased the minimum wage to keep pace with the cost of living, raising it to \$1.60 in 1968, \$2.30 in 1976, \$3.35 in 1981, \$5.15 in 1997, and \$7.25 in 2009. Unfortunately, Congress has let the minimum wage fall behind. The current minimum wage is worth 25 percent less in buying power than the minimum wage I received in the 1970s while washing dishes at Boise's Elk's Hospital or moving irrigation pipe at a Garden Valley ranch.

Traditionally, both parties supported raising the minimum wage to keep up with the cost of living. No longer. In April, Sen. James Risch and other far right Republicans blocked an effort to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 over a three-year period. Nonetheless, raising the minimum wage has overwhelming support: a recent Gallup poll found that even 50 percent of Republicans supported it.

The \$10.10 proposal would have helped about 176,000 people in Idaho where 29,000 workers receive the bare minimum and 147,000 others make less than \$10.10. Working

40 hours per week for 52 weeks at \$7.25 an hour, a minimum wage worker earns about \$15,000 for the year. If the minimum wage is raised to \$10.10, that same worker would receive almost \$6,000 more a year. That could make a huge difference in someone's life—a decent apartment, school supplies for a child, a more reliable car.



Without doubt, raising the minimum wage will also help local economies. Minimum wage workers will not ship their earnings to the Cayman Islands or Swiss bank accounts. The additional income will be spent right here at home in Idaho. Why, then, did Risch vote to kill the minimum wage bill? Perhaps he doesn't know that the cost of living has been going up. After all, Senators who receive \$174,000 per year salaries don't worry about making ends meet.

Some suggest that, by raising the minimum wage, we would somehow hurt teenage workers. But, the average age of a minimum wage worker is 35 years old. Almost 60 percent of minimum wage workers are women, and 25 percent are parents.

Others claim that raising the minimum wage may cost jobs. However, that argument ignores the research. The New York Times recently explained, "The minimum wage is one of the most thoroughly researched issues in economics...The weight of the evidence shows that increases in the minimum wage have lifted pay without hurting employment, a point that was driven home in a recent letter to [the President] and congressional leaders, signed by more than 600 economists, among them Nobel laureates and past presidents of the American Economic Association."

I suspect Risch voted to kill the \$10.10 minimum wage bill because special interests making record profits on the backs of underpaid workers wanted it killed. After all, minimum wage workers have no Washington lobbyists, and they can't write big campaign checks.

But minimum wage workers are not without power. They can vote. It is time that low wage workers and those who believe in economic fairness stand up and make their voices heard. I support raising the minimum wage. Jim Risch doesn't. Register. Vote. And remember in November.

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## Popkey: Resigned to its dysfunction, Risch loves the Senate

By DAN POPKEY

Idaho Statesman May 6, 2013

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Jim Risch

### STATESMAN FILE

Idaho Sen. Jim Risch celebrated his 70th birthday Friday, content in his likely re-election in 2014 to another six years where he can fine-tune his expertise on the Middle East and North Africa.

“You know, I really enjoy this job. I really like this job,” Risch said last week, saying it’s a breeze compared to the seven months he served as governor in 2006. “Governor will wear you down. You can’t do that job permanently. This you can do ad infinitum.”

Home for a Senate recess that included a visit with the Statesman editorial board, Risch was remarkably passive about the failure of Congress to deal with the country’s problems, starting with a \$16 trillion debt.

“I can’t explain to you how dysfunctional it is back there,” Risch said, predicting it will take a catastrophe for the national legislature to tackle its responsibilities. “They’re really not bad when it comes to crisis. If there’s a war, if there’s, you know, like the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, those kinds of crises seem to bring people together.”

Rather than stick his neck out like his Idaho GOP colleagues — Sen. Mike Crapo and Reps. Mike Simpson and Raul Labrador — Risch has avoided leadership on the debt crisis or immigration.

The biggest splash of his four-plus years came last month, when he was the voice of Republicans vowing a filibuster aimed at stalling votes on gun legislation, a sure-fire base builder for re-election.

Risch also is proud of employing a temporary block of President Barack Obama’s nomination of Sally Jewell as Interior secretary. The tactic was meant to persuade the administration to embrace Gov. Butch Otter’s plan to keep sage grouse off the endangered species list.

“If you’ve got a low tolerance for frustration with the governing process this isn’t the job for you,” Risch said. “You’ve got to learn to do the best you can, get what you can and move on.”

Risch touts his role as the top Republican on the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs, which tracks North Africa and the Middle East. That’s meant a lot of overseas trips for the senator and his staff.

On Syria, he says, “the president does not have good options,” because supporting the rebellion against Syrian President Bashar Assad will mean “you’re going to be having to sidle up to al-Qaida and some others that are not-so-savory characters.”

The last Idaho senator to take such an interest in foreign affairs was Democrat Frank Church, who chaired the full committee and led the passage of the Panama Canal treaty. Church, after 24 years, was defeated in 1980 in significant part because Idahoans thought he’d caught “Potomac fever” and lost touch with Idaho.

Risch’s conservative voting may inoculate him from such a malady. But to hear him wax eloquent about life in the Senate makes one wonder if he risks being branded as a dilettante.

With his wife, Vicki, at his side, Risch boasted about her membership on the board of Ford’s Theater, where the couple entertain themselves “relatively frequently.” Last year, Mrs. Risch chaired the luncheon for Michelle Obama, organized by Senate spouses. Their condo is on Pennsylvania Avenue, Risch said, allowing the pleasure of spectating at various misguided protests.

Despite the failure of the Senate to agree on matters vital to the nation’s future, everybody gets along just swell, Risch reports.

“You hear about this toxic atmosphere,” he said, but it’s not like that when senators and their spouses get together. “We talk about our kids, we talk about sports. ... Socially, the people are incredibly, incredibly civil to each other.”

Risch brushes off criticism the Senate takes too much time off from Washington. “There’s nothing happening when we’re back there and there’s nothing happening when we’re not back there. What’s the difference?”

He chortles at the toothless threats of Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., to make the Senate work weekends. Said Risch, who spent about two decades as a leader in the Idaho Senate: “Can you imagine if I would have stood up on the floor as the majority leader and said, ‘We’re going to work this Saturday’ and then not do it?”

Risch is nostalgic about his 22 years in the state Senate, 5 1/2 years as lieutenant governor and brief stint as governor. He wishes he could click his heels and transport 105 Idaho lawmakers to Washington. “Put them in charge and they’d straighten this thing out in a couple few months,” he said. “They’ve got common sense. They can understand these things and they actually do stuff.”

What I find odd about Risch’s blithe spirit is how easily he’s adapted after a lifetime of making things happen.

“When you wake up in the morning and you’re governor they hand you a plate and it’s pretty full and they say, ‘Eat this.’ And you’ve got to eat what’s on the plate.

“That’s one of the differences with this job. You can do a lot more of what you want to do. There’s 100 senators, 435 congressmen; we all have our own ideas, our own passions in life. We all have our own interests and you can pursue them.”

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# The LEWISTON TRIBUNE

## Tax Shift Brought More Pain to Lapwai

by Marty Trillhaase, May 24, 2014

**When voters turned thumbs down on a supplemental levy Tuesday, Lapwai School District discovered what it's like to be on the losing end of Sen. Jim Risch's tax shift.**

While serving as Idaho's interim governor during the summer of 2006, Risch insisted on bringing the

Legislature into a one-day special session to radically change how public schools got money. Gone was the maintenance and operation property levy, which generated \$260 million for public schools. Risch replaced it with a penny increase in the sales tax, which produced \$210 million.

Almost every school suffered because the switch destabilized state support for public education. Budgets have yet to recover from the cuts imposed during the Great Recession.

But for poorer districts such as Lapwai, Risch's program was even more devastating. As the state continued to renege on its obligation to pay for education, local districts resorted to voter-approved supplemental property tax levies. Idaho has 115 school districts and all but about two dozen of them now rely on those special levies- nearly double what it was a decade ago.

Combined, those levies raise about \$190 million- triple the amount generated 10 years ago. Before Risch fiddled with the system, every property owner paid the same M and O levy- about \$300 on \$100,000 of taxable value. Funneled into a state account, those dollars were apportioned to Idaho's schoolchildren on an equalized basis. The state devoted roughly the same resources to every student, regardless of where he lived.

Today, it's the law of the jungle. Districts keep what they raise locally- which works out great for rich districts, where a relatively small levy brings a lot of money.

Poor districts, such as Lapwai, pay through the nose just to keep up. Lapwai can put about \$289,000 of property tax value behind each of its students. Compare that to nearby Whitepine School District, where the tax base puts \$732,972 behind each student.

For instance, to generate \$1,037 more money for each of its students, Lapwai needed a levy of about \$359 per \$100,000 of taxable value.

Getting the same amount of money per student in White pine requires an effective tax rate of only \$142 per \$100,000.

Asking Lapwai's patrons to pay far more and accept less is dicey. Lapwai's political undercurrents make it even more difficult to pass a levy. Some taxpayers believe the Nez Perce Tribe, not private taxpayers, should pick up the burden.

Hence, Lapwai put off seeking a supplemental levy for about as long as it could. By the time the school district asked voters for \$499,000, it had already absorbed the loss of about \$145,000 in federal impact aid. Likewise, state support had dwindled from about \$24,695 per classroom unit eight years ago to \$20,000 now.

Reserves are running low. When teachers left or retired, they weren't replaced. The district shares its business manager with Highland School District.

Tuesday, Lapwai rejected the levy by nearly 58 percent, which translates into another 7.4 percent budget cut.

So not only must Lapwai confront shrinking federal and state dollars, but it must face the harsh political reality that it may linger among those few Idaho schools unable to raise money locally. That could mean the loss of all-day kindergarten. Music programs might be lost permanently. After-school and summer programs are threatened. Class sizes will swell.

Eight years after Risch passed his bill, Lapwai is getting more than its fair share of the wreckage he left behind. There are a lot of reasons: a string of tax cuts totalling \$450 million since 2000. Artificially low-balled revenue projections that justified unnecessarily deep program cuts. A 25-percent decline in the share of Idaho's personal income devoted to schools.

But much of the credit goes to Jim Risch. Before he was elected to the U.S. Senate, Risch served a brief period as Idaho's interim governor in 2006 – after the man elected to that post, Dirk Kempthorne, resigned to become George W. Bush's Interior secretary.

Risch made the most of it. In the dead of August, he called the Legislature into one-day special session.

He then rammed through a bill that eliminated \$260 million of property tax support for public schools and replaced it with about \$210 million in sales taxes. He tolerated no dissent. He refused to consider any alternatives. The results speak for themselves. Wealthy landowners and corporations got a break. Poor people paid more sales taxes. And the financial foundation for public schools began to crumble.

When the Great Recession struck, Idaho's volatile sales taxes collapsed and took with them public school budgets. Worse, those school districts least able to withstand the downturn got hurt the worst. Before Risch tinkered with the system, Idaho's school funding formula used state dollars to "equalize" the property taxes collected by rich and poor districts, so that each district got its fair share of total funds.

Risch replaced it with the law of the jungle.

That's a good deal for taxpayers in a rich district such as McCall, which can put \$4.7 million of property value behind each of its students. A small levy raises a lot of money.

But it's a crapshoot for impoverished communities such as Snake River, where the property tax base yields a scant \$153,000 per student. So the taxpayer in Snake River must pay 30 times more tax to provide his children with the same level of support students get in McCall.

That's some legacy.

Perhaps Idahoans should remember it by proclaiming the second Tuesday in March Jim Risch Day.



## Lewiston Tribune – It’s a loser, but tax shift is all that Risch has

By Marty Trillhaase - April 20, 2014

In this newspaper Sunday and elsewhere, Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, is defending his 2006 scheme to cut the \$260 million school maintenance and operation property tax levy and replace about \$210 million by raising Idaho’s sales tax from five to six cents.

### Why remind everyone?

Unless you’re part of the Idaho 1 percent, odds are the M&O tax shift hurt you more than it helped. Eight years ago, Risch was Idaho’s second banana when Gov. Dirk Kempthorne was elevated to become President George W. Bush’s secretary of the Interior. As Idaho’s interim chief executive, Risch insisted on calling 105 lawmakers into a one-day special session in the dog days of August – and then ramming through his bill. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2008 after Larry Craig retired.

If, like Risch, you owned lots of property and earned wads of cash, this was a reasonably good deal. One of the richest members of the Senate, Risch acknowledged in 2009 that his tax shift saved him about \$48,000 each year in property taxes. Likewise, corporations and out-of-state landlords made out all right. But unless you were earning about \$135,000 in 2006 – and considerably more today – you probably wound up paying more in higher sales taxes than you saved in reduced property taxes.

And since Mr. Risch went to Washington, school property taxes have skyrocketed. To compensate for cuts at the state level, the number of school districts relying upon supplemental tax levies has more than doubled, from 40 at the turn of the century to almost 90 today. The \$60 million of voluntary taxes Idahoans paid 14 years ago is up to \$190 million today.

If you’re a public school student – or the parent of one – Risch’s plan didn’t do you much good. First, it siphoned \$50 million out of the state coffers. Next, it set the stage for another huge loss. Once the sales tax reached 6 percent, lawmakers felt obliged to reimburse Idahoans for the taxes they pay on groceries. When fully implemented in two years, this tax credit will drain \$130 million every year from the account that funds education.

Then Risch’s plan destabilized public school budgets – replacing a reliable source of money at the local level with more volatile sales and income taxes on the eve of the Great Recession. Risch’s former colleagues in the GOP-controlled Legislature wound up passing the first public school budget cut in Idaho history.

And if you live in one of Idaho’s poorer communities, Risch’s plan was a double whammy. The system he vaporized at least equalized the local tax effort. Now if you live in a school district like Snake River, you pay 30 times as much to keep up with a wealthy area such as McCall.

All of which helped launch Idaho’s death spiral to near-last-in-the-nation rankings for incomes and school support. That wasn’t Risch’s intention, of course. But his arrogance and ambition blinded him to the risks. So why does he continue to talk about it? Why doesn’t he, instead, focus public attention on the legislative accomplishments he’s piled up these last six years in Washington, D.C.? Because he has none. He’s sponsored just 16 bills in the Senate. In one two-year period, the Center for Responsive Politics ranked him as second least productive member of the Senate.

Last year, he candidly told the Idaho Statesman’s Dan Popkey he wasn’t exactly breaking a sweat: “Governor will wear you down. You can’t do that job permanently. This you can do ad infinitum.” Observed Popkey: “To hear him wax eloquent about life in the Senate makes one wonder if he risks being branded as a dilettante.” Risch has no choice but to keep talking about his M&O tax shift. What else has he got to show for the last eight years in public life?

# Our View: Education Will Flounder Until 2006 Mistake is Fixed

**MARCH 16, 2014 - Times-News Editorial Board – THE MAGIC VALLEY TIMES-NEWS**

U.S. Sen. Jim Risch still lauds his 2006 initiative — the biggest political victory during his short stint as Idaho’s governor — that robbed local schools of property taxing power, tied education funding to sales tax and centralized power in Boise. And as Idaho’s starving public schools continue their race to the bottom, we can’t understand why.

“Yes, funding goes up and down based on the economy,” Risch said Friday when asked if binding educational funding to the finicky markets was a good move. “When the people have less money, the government has less money. A lot of people seem to believe that government should be held harmless.”

He admits the system’s defect, even while defending it.

Last week, 11 Magic Valley schools went to the voters begging for money. Some wanted millions to build new facilities and fix leaky roofs. Too many others are just trying to keep the lights on.

The state Legislature in 2006 overwhelmingly endorsed the switch. It made sense to many as frustrated taxpayers clamored for relief. But within 18 months, Wall Street left the nation reeling and the fundamental flaw in Risch’s plan was exposed when people stopped buying. Since the 2008 crash, individual schools have lost millions. Numerous superintendents have told us money that would have been spent on building maintenance is now spent on preserving science classes. Withering buildings, plunging student attainment and growing class sizes are the spawn of the move to sales tax.

Risch contends that schools can still ask voters for supplemental levies, so they haven’t lost any power to make up the losses incurred over the past six years, assuming they can “convince the local people” to support them at the ballot. But too many fail, and, without the taxing power, our schools are failing, plain and simple.

State Senate and House leadership immediately get defensive when asked if the 2006 switch was a mistake. Lawmakers are more concerned with saving face than righting a wrong. It's more than a shame, it's a slight to their duty to draft responsible policy.

Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter said education was his top priority during January's State of the State address. Yet, neither he nor the Legislature have taken a single meaningful step toward solving the cash issues that are plaguing Idaho, turning off would-be employers in need of an educated workforce and handicapping our children for the rest of their lives. The Legislative session has been a bust; one packed with pandering and political one-upmanship. If this is how Otter treats his "priorities," we hate to see how less important issues are handled.

Educating the youth is a quintessential government function, one that benefits an entire population and frames history's narrative for decades to come. They call it the Dark Ages for a reason. Education is maybe our most important infrastructure and it's failing in Idaho.

Risch and the Legislature made a mistake — and assumed the U.S. economy was bulletproof — in 2006 when they tacked on an extra penny to sales tax and left our schools in Wall Street's greedy palms. People make mistakes. But any leader worth his or her salt is willing to swallow their pride and rectify the situation. Idaho's leaders have no choice but to return educational funding to the stable property tax model. Until that happens, everything else they do is nothing but smoke and mirrors.

# Carlson: Cracks in Risch Armor

March 11, 2014 - Chris Carlson - The Carlson Chronicle



Idaho Senator Jim Risch's cruise to easy re-election might not be the lock Republicans would like to think.

A poll of 773 Idaho voters (the margin of error is +/- 3.5 percent) during late February by Public Policy Polling revealed some potential problems for the often acerbic, staunchly conservative senator who is the 15th wealthiest member of Congress.

The numbers have to be heartening for Risch challenger Nels Mitchell, a successful Boise-raised attorney seeking his first public office.

There are two key numbers that incumbents, pundits and lobbyists give careful scrutiny: the favorability number and the re-elect number. In Risch's case, both signal potential problems.

Risch's favorability number was 47 percent (22 percent very favorable, 25 percent somewhat favorable). An old and venerable political rule of thumb is that anytime an incumbent's number is below 50 percent, there's trouble on the horizon.

Even more troubling for Risch was the so-called re-elect number. The question can be posed several ways: "If the election for the U.S. Senate were held today, would you vote for Senator Risch?" Or, "Given what you know today regarding Senator Risch and his record, would you return him to office or would you consider someone else?"

According to the PPP, only 36 percent of Idaho voters are solidly committed to Risch, while 48 percent think it is time to consider someone else. Like many Republicans, Risch is especially in trouble with women voters, particularly independent women voters, as well as Democratic women voters and pro-choice Republican women.

Almost half the respondents to the poll (45 percent) said they were less likely to support Risch because of his vote against the Violence Against Women Act. Some 31 percent said they were more likely to vote for him because of that vote.



Many Idaho voters also are critical of the Senator's mishandling of Republican House colleague Mike Simpson's proposed Boulder-White Clouds legislation. Some 46 percent of those responding said they were less likely to vote for the Senator because of his meddling obstructionism, while 25 percent said they would be more likely.

The poll appears to confirm anecdotal evidence that Risch laid some seeds that could result in a huge upset come November. The Senator's comments to Idaho Statesman political editor Dan Popkey a year ago last December regarding the easy path he was pursuing because nothing was getting done in gridlocked Washington, D.C., and that he could in effect put it on cruise control forever, in contrast to the hard job he found his seven months as governor to be, still rankles many.

His globe-trotting, often with wife Vicki, because he is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, does not appear to relate to or benefit Idaho business interests. His boastful pride in being designated the most conservative member of the U.S. Senate, a veritable abominable "No" man regardless of the merit of various legislation. His insensitivity to the less fortunate in our midst who aren't sheltered from the vicissitudes of life by the millions he has — all of these combined could spell trouble in November.

The key will be whether Nels Mitchell can raise the money to get his message out that it's time for a change and that Idaho needs a senator who will work constructively for the citizenry. Reportedly, Mitchell has been working hard at tapping an extensive network of friends across Idaho and from New York to Los Angeles for the kind of money it will take to exploit the cracks appearing in the Risch armor.

Time will tell, but there's a glimmer of hope in these numbers for Mitchell, and a clear "stormy seas" ahead message for Risch.

Kellogg native Chris Carlson was the longtime press secretary for former four-term Gov. Cecil D. Andrus.



By Chris Carlson, March 7, 2014

## Cracks in the armor?



**CHRIS  
CARLSON**

*Carlson  
Chronicles*

Idaho Senator Jim Risch's cruise to easy re-election just may not be the lock Republicans would like to think.

A poll of 773 Idaho voters (the margin of error is +/- 3.5%) during late February by Public Policy Polling revealed some potential problems for the often acerbic, staunchly conservative senator who is the 15th most wealthy member of Congress.

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# Idaho Statesman

By DAN POPKEY

dpopkey@idahostatesman.com

January 14, 2014

## Nels Mitchell vows to beat 'career politician' Idaho Sen. Risch

Democrat Nels Mitchell blamed Republican Sen. Jim Risch for Idaho's low-wage economy and said that after 37 years in elected office, Risch puts perks ahead of the interests of Idaho.

"I run to replace a career politician with a citizen legislator," said Mitchell, a first-time candidate who announced his campaign at the Boise Depot Tuesday. "I run to help restore the vision of our founding fathers. Jim Risch has lost touch with the concept of public service, and, more importantly, with the people of Idaho. It is time for him to retire."

Mitchell, 60, said he would serve a single six-year term if elected. "I will be beholden to no one but the people of Idaho," he said. in income. "Someone has not been minding the store and that someone is Jim Risch," he said.



Mitchell faulted Risch for Idaho's ranking highest in the country for the proportion of minimum-wage workers and ranking 50th in income. "Someone has not been minding the store and that someone is Jim Risch," he said.

A lawyer, Mitchell was raised in Boise, graduated from the University of Idaho Law School and spent two years as a law clerk for Idaho-based 9th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge J. Blaine Anderson. He then left the state, spending 27 years working in California and New York.

In 2008, Mitchell returned to Boise to practice law with Idaho House Assistant Minority Leader Grant Burgoyne, D-Boise, and Bill Mauk, a former Democratic Party chairman who ran for the U.S. Senate in 1998. Mitchell said he is closing down his law practice and will campaign full time.

Risch, 70, a Republican, is one of Idaho's most successful politicians ever. Since being elected Ada County Prosecutor in 1970, he has held elected office for all but eight years. He spent 22 years in the Idaho Senate, including 12 years as Senate majority leader and six years as president pro tem. He was lieutenant governor for 5 years and five months and succeeded to the governorship in 2006, serving seven months. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2008.

Mitchell was introduced by former Democratic state Sen. Mike Burkett, one of just two candidates to ever defeat Risch. Burkett unseated then Senate President Pro Tem Risch in 1988 in the most expensive race in the history of the Legislature.

"Jim Risch has come down with a bad case of Potomac fever," Burkett said Tuesday, saying the senator is "addicted to power," and has forgotten "about the people back home."



By On Your Side newsroom - January 14, 2014



## Nels Mitchell to run against Jim Risch for U.S. Senate seat

Nels Mitchell has announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Jim Risch.

Mitchell made the announcement in front of a crowd of supporters at the Train Depot in downtown Boise and vowed to make jobs his number one priority.

In his speech, Mitchell noted that Risch has held public office for almost 40 years and believes the Founding Father would not have wanted career politicians running Washington.

"They conceived of a Senate in which citizen legislators would step forward to serve their country for a limited time before returning to their private lives," Mitchell said. "For that reason, I will run for one term and one term only."

"I am not a politician. I have had a successful career, and it is now my turn to step up," Mitchell said. "Six years is a long time. During that time, I will work as hard as I possibly can to represent Idaho and its people with energy, purpose and integrity. I will be beholden to nobody but the people of Idaho."

Mitchell said the gridlock in Washington can be addressed. "I do not believe, as Sen. Risch does, that it's impossible to accomplish anything in the Senate," he said. If that's the case, why do we pay him? I commit to you that I won't make excuses and I won't take junkets. No excuses, no junkets, period."

Mitchell said the 2014 election will be pivotal. "In 2014, we the people must reclaim the U.S. Senate from the control of career politicians. It is not too late for the United States Senate to reestablish credibility and restore the confidence of the American people."

By ADAM COTTERELL - January 14, 2014

## Boise Democrat, Lawyer Officially Launches Bid For U.S. Senate

Boise lawyer Nels Mitchell wants to take Idaho's U.S. Senate seat away from Republican Jim Risch. Mitchell, a Democrat officially announced his candidacy Tuesday in Boise.

Mitchell grew up in Idaho, but most of his 30-plus year career has been spent in California and New York. That includes a stint at the Securities and Exchange Commission.

He returned to Boise in 2008 and works for the law firm Mauk and Burgoyne, and teaches part-time for his alma mater, the University of Idaho College of Law.

Mitchell's only direct political experience was as Boise High School's student body president more than 40 years ago, and class vice president at Columbia University. For Mitchell, running for the U.S. Senate is a return to old aspirations.

"When I was growing up here in Boise [Senator] Frank Church was my hero," Mitchell says. "He was student body president at Boise High 29 years before I was. There was a time when I was younger that I thought I'd be the next Frank Church. Well, life has a way of getting in the way."

But Mitchell wants to turn his lack of experience into an advantage. He's focusing his campaign on painting his opponent, Republican Jim Risch, as a career politician who is out of touch with Idahoans.

"Our Republic is best served when new leaders step forward, serve for a time and then step aside and let the next generation of leaders step up to the plate," Mitchell said in his campaign announcement. "I do not intend to serve more than one six year term. Six years is a long time."



At his campaign announcement Mitchell was backed by people holding anti-Risch signs. The most prominent read "No More Career Politicians."

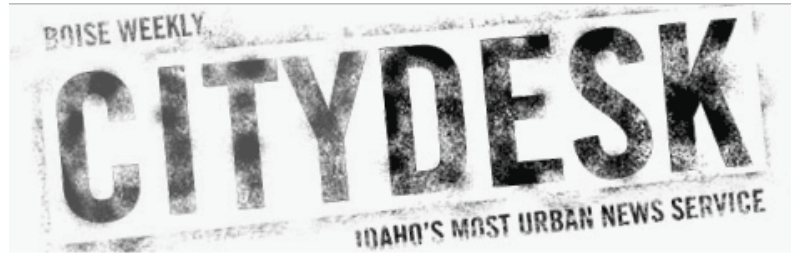


In his announcement speech Mitchell expressed admiration for former governor Cecil Andrus. The two spoke afterward and Andrus advised him to always know where the cameras are.

In addition to the U.S. Senate, Risch has served as Idaho's lieutenant governor and in the state Legislature.

Mitchell also had some more specific criticisms for Risch such as his vote not to end the government shutdown last fall and his vote against reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act.

Sen. Risch responded to Mitchell's candidacy on his campaign website, writing, "This year Idahoans will once again have a clear choice between Senator Risch's conservative philosophies or another Democrat who will go to Washington DC to grow the government and help Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi push Obama's far left agenda during the last 2 years of his presidency."



Posted by George Prentice - January 14, 2014

## 'Nels' Mitchell Launches Democratic Challenge to Sen. Jim Risch

Boise attorney Briane "Nels" Mitchell is announcing his candidacy today for the Democratic nomination to challenge Idaho Republican U.S. Sen. Jim Risch.

When Risch first ran for the U.S. Senate in 2008, he defeated former Democratic Rep. Larry LaRocco.

"With Idaho wages at 50th in the nation, it is time for our career politicians, like U.S. Sen. James Risch, to retire," reads a statement from the Idaho Democratic Party.

Mitchell is a graduate of Boise High School, Columbia University and the University of Idaho Law School.

Mitchell is a member of the Boise law firm of Mauk and Burgoyne, which includes Boise Democratic Rep. Grant Burgoyne, the Idaho House assistant minority leader.

Before joining the Boise firm, Mitchell practiced law at several Los Angeles and New York firms. Additionally, he served as law clerk to Idaho-based 9th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge J. Blaine Anderson and was associate regional director for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

## Mitchell, Risch Trade Jobs



The Boise attorney challenging U.S. Sen. Jim Risch shot back Wednesday at the one-term Republican during a meeting with members of the Times-News editorial board.

Only hours after Democrat Nels Mitchell announced his candidacy, the Risch campaign fired off a statement trying to link Mitchell with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and a "big spending liberal legislative agenda."

"I don't think I've ever been within 150 miles of Harry Reid," Mitchell said of Risch's accusation that he was handpicked. He fired back that Risch has spent his term in Washington serving the interests of himself and hardcore conservatives.

In roughly 24 hours, the 2014 race for Idaho's U.S. Senate seat went from nonexistent to full bore, with both camps hoping to define the other as "extreme."

Mitchell's campaign is focused on labeling Risch a "fringe" tea party conservative, one who voted against funding for Idaho National Laboratory and the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. The campaign's message aims to isolate Risch from at least two of his peers in the Idaho Congressional delegation.

Mitchell's narrative targets moderate Republicans who might be unhappy with Risch's conservatism.

"I'm a moderate Democrat," said the 60 year-old Boise native. "A lot of us are middle-of-the-road Democrats."

Mitchell said, if elected, he would team up with Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, and champion federal protection of the Boulder-White Clouds tract through legislation. He also said he would have partnered with Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, and co-sponsored VAWA.

It's Mitchell's first run at public office. He's a law partner of state Rep. Grant Burgoyne, D-Boise. He'll face questions about his time practicing outside of the state, or in Risch's words, his "strong ties to California and New York."

Mitchell has targeted a well-known public official in a strongly red state, though Risch's war chest isn't nearly as large as many Senate incumbents. Risch had \$650,000 in his campaign account as of Oct. 1, according to the most recent federal election filings.

Risch's campaign on Wednesday sent out a fundraising mailer.

Risch has gained influence in Washington as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mitchell said he would instead hope for a seat on the Agriculture Committee because he could do "more good for Idaho."





Sun Jan 19, 2014 at 10:19 PM PST.

The Book Bear

## Idaho U.S. Senate Candidate Nels Mitchell Charges Onto The Field

Nels Mitchell came out strong in his campaign to become Idaho's next United States Senator. At least, two important factors favor Mr. Mitchell: 1) James Risch has done virtually nothing in the past five years to help Idaho and 2) Mitchell is a tremendously well-qualified, hard-working, articulate person who will put Idaho families and businesses first.

Mitchell (Check out his Nels Mitchell for United States Senate website and like him on Facebook) made his announcement Monday before a crowd of supporters gathered at the Boise Train Depot. Since then, he has traveled to Twin Falls and sent out two press releases blasting Risch for his very bad case of Potomac Fever.

Here's some coverage of Mitchell's announcement in the Idaho Statesman:



Nels Mitchell vows to beat 'career politician' Idaho Sen. Risch

**Posted on January 14, 2014 by Dan Popkey**

*Democrat Nels Mitchell blamed Republican Sen. Jim Risch for Idaho's low-wage economy and said that after 37 years in elected office he puts perks ahead of the interests of Idaho.*

*"I run to replace a career politician with a citizen legislator," said Mitchell, a first-time candidate who announced his campaign at the Boise Depot Tuesday. "I run to help restore the vision of our founding fathers. Jim Risch has lost touch with the concept of public service, and, more importantly, with the people of Idaho. It is time for him to retire."*

*Mitchell, 60, said he would serve a single six-year term if elected. "I will be beholden to no one but the people of Idaho," he said.*

*Mitchell faulted Risch for Idaho's ranking highest in the country for the proportion of minimum-wage workers and ranking 50th in income. "Someone has not been minding the store and that someone is Jim Risch," he said.*

**And Randy Stapilus recently wrote:**

*An echo came in May 2013 when (Risch) told the Idaho Statesman, "You know, I really enjoy this job. I really like this job. Governor will wear you down. You can't do that job permanently. This you can do ad infinitum." An accompanying news article described him as "remarkably passive about the failure of Congress to deal with the country's problems," and "to hear him wax eloquent about life in the Senate makes one wonder if he risks being branded as a dilettante."*

*Repeated news articles about his and his staff's regular trips abroad (he is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, so in his personal case there's actually some call for them) and some talk that he's not been spending a lot of time in Idaho or with his base, could be a basis for reviving some of those old critiques, on a larger scale.*

*Mitchell has a cool demeanor (though he's been a federal litigator, which suggests something about what's beneath that) and the positioning of an outsider, and he's offered a promise to serve but one term. What appeal may that have?*

*There are politicians who develop a teflon surface, and those who don't. The second kind can survive too. But put the wrong set of circumstances together, and surprises can happen.*

Who is Nels Mitchell?

Nels Mitchell is a Westerner through and through. He was born in Seattle and raised in Idaho. His parents moved to Boise in 1968. Nels and his two brothers attended Boise public schools and all three graduated from Boise High School. At Boise High, Nels was Student Body President and a member of the Debate Team – the same path his boyhood hero, Sen. Frank Church, had followed nearly 30 years before.

Nels Mitchell The Mitchells were outdoor people. Nels and his family fished and hunted in Idaho's backcountry, and Nels was on the Ski Team at Boise High. He still loves to hunt, fish and ski, though he proudly admits that his older daughter, Brianne, is now the real fly-caster of the family.

There was a lot of love but not a lot of extras in the Mitchell household, and everyone had to earn their own way. The young Nels had a series of classic Idaho jobs: moving irrigation pipe, delivering papers for the Statesman, clearing rocks at Bogus Basin, thinning lodge pole pine in the Stanley Basin, washing dishes at the Elk's Hospital and mowing lawns in Ann Morrison Park. Later, in college and law school, he spent three summers as the caretaker of the Garden Valley Airport and on the crew that maintained small airports around the state.

### Academic Excellence

After Boise High, Nels was offered an achievement scholarship to Columbia University, long a magnet for high-achieving Idaho students. At Columbia, he served as class vice president, earned two varsity athletic letters, and graduated in three years so he could come home to Idaho. He won a scholarship to the University of Idaho Law School, and was delighted that he could be there at the same time as his two brothers, Mike and Rob.

### A Distinguished Career

Nels has been a practicing attorney for more than 30 years, in both the public and private sectors. After graduating from law school, he clerked for Judge J. Blaine Anderson, who was nominated to the federal bench by Sen. Len Jordan and Sen. James McClure. He then practiced law in both large and small law firms, where he felt first-hand the pressures faced by all business owners and employers trying to meet a payroll and turn a profit. No matter what the case, Nels' touchstone was fairness and his goal was to help his clients reach common-sense solutions to the problems facing them.

After a successful career in private practice, Nels wanted to use his legal background and training to benefit the larger community. He looked for – and found – a position where he could apply his experience to further his ideal of fairness and help secure a level playing field for everyone. As an Associate Regional Director and Regional Trial Counsel for the Securities and Exchange Commission, Nels managed a staff of 75 employees investigating and prosecuting financial fraud in the western states.

Nels served six years on the University of Idaho Law School Advisory Council, and has been a part-time teacher at the University of Idaho Law School for ten years. He has also served on committees for Columbia University, the American Bar Association and the U.S. State Department.

### The Mitchell Family

The Mitchell Family Nels has two grown daughters: Brianne is a practicing attorney; Brittany is a second-year law student. The girls grew up with sports. Nels volunteered as their soccer coach when they were teenagers, and Nels taught both daughters to fish.

Nels has hunted, fished, skied and hiked his whole life, and he and his wife, Mary Kimmel, have a deep love for Idaho's outdoors. Nels and Mary live in West Boise, with two rescue dogs, another adopted dog, a Quarter Horse and a cat.

Nels remains extremely close to his two brothers and his 91-year-old mother, who still lives in Boise. He has established a scholarship at Boise High in memory of his father and in honor of his mother.

Nels credits his parents and his grandparents with instilling the values of hard work and close family ties, and with teaching him to always stand on the side of fairness and justice



By Randy Stapilus - January 19, 2014

## Lesson from the past

An array of familiar Democratic faces turned up Tuesday at the Boise press conference where attorney Nels Mitchell announced his run for the Senate against Republican Jim Risch, but one in particular may have resonated for people familiar with recent Idaho politics.

He was Mike Burkett, a former state senator and like Mitchell an attorney. Also like him, he has run as a Democrat against Risch. What's remarkable about Burkett is that he is one of the few people ever to beat Risch in a political contest.

That was in 1988, long before Risch was a U.S. senator, but at another time when he was powerfully positioned in the state, as Senate president pro tem. Risch then had been winning elections for 18 years (for county prosecutor, then senator) and had never lost one. He was very smart, disciplined, an excellent speaker and debater and (with his wife Vicki) a fine political strategist, and centrally positioned among Idaho Republicans in his points of view.

There was also a rap on him: That he was arrogant, loved to wield power, stepped on people. Respect was there; likability slipped over time. By 1986 Risch's winning margin was 54 percent, not a marker of strength. In 1988 he made the mistake of backing a primary challenge to a sometimes obstreperous member of his caucus, Rachel Gilbert. Gilbert, as was her wont, shot back, describing Risch as a Statehouse power out to crush independent-minded people like her. She won her primary.

When Burkett ran against Risch that year, he played a role Gilbert could have scripted: As an outsider and an unknown with a small-town demeanor, which didn't stop him from blasting Risch strongly, feeding the narrative of Risch as a powerful insider. Risch lost.

That of course was a quarter-century ago, and Idaho was a different place then, less Republican than now. Risch since has gone on to win more elections. (Disclaimer here: I was campaign manager for one of his opponents, in 2002.) The power-seeker rap wouldn't work nearly as well now in the context of a U.S. Senate seat, where he's one vote out of 100, and in the minority (at present), and working mostly outside the state.

Other variations could develop, though.

An echo came in May 2013 when he told the Idaho Statesman, "You know, I really enjoy this job. I really like this job. Governor will wear you down. You can't do that job permanently. This you can do ad infinitum." An accompanying news article described him as "remarkably passive about the failure of Congress to deal with the country's problems," and "to hear him wax eloquent about life in the Senate makes one wonder if he risks being branded as a dilettante."

Repeated news articles about his and his staff's regular trips abroad (he is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, so in his personal case there's actually some call for them) and some talk that he's not been spending a lot of time in Idaho or with his base, could be a basis for reviving some of those old critiques, on a larger scale.

Mitchell has a cool demeanor (though he's been a federal litigator, which suggests something about what's beneath that) and the positioning of an outsider, and he's offered a promise to serve but one term. What appeal may that have?

There are politicians who develop a teflon surface, and those who don't. The second kind can survive too. But put the wrong set of circumstances together, and surprises can happen.

## Boise Democrat launches campaign against Sen. Risch



Boise attorney Nels Mitchell launched his campaign for the U.S. Senate against Idaho Sen. Jim Risch today, calling Risch an “out of touch” career politician and pledging if elected to serve just one six-year term. “Six years is a long time,” Mitchell said. “I will give the people of Idaho 110 percent for the next six years, and then I intend to return to private life.”

Mitchell, 60, is making his first run for public office. He noted that legendary Idaho Democratic Sen. Frank Church had only run once for the state Legislature before he successfully ran for the U.S. Senate. “When I was growing up here in Boise, Frank Church was my hero,” Mitchell said, noting that Church served as student body president at Boise High School 29 years before Mitchell did the same.

He said jobs will be his top priority, and decried Idaho’s fall to 50th on such measures as average wage and per-capita income. “Someone has not been minding the store, and that someone is Jim Risch,” Mitchell declared. “He’s been much too busy taking junkets and going to the theater.” He also faulted Risch for voting against funding for the Idaho National Laboratory, calling the INL “one of the best employers in the state.”

Former Democratic Gov. Cecil Andrus said, “The Democrats have got a good shot this time. Is it going to be easy? No. But when they’ve got the money and the organization, we ought to have the people. He’s an outstanding candidate – look at his resume. Now we’ve got to raise enough money to tell the story.”

Democratic activist and former U.S. Attorney for Idaho Betty Richardson said she first met Mitchell in high school. “He’s cut from the same cloth as Cece Andrus and Frank Church – we can’t do much better,” she said.



By Corey Taule - January 26, 2014 | Idaho Falls Post Register

## A Response from "Brad"

After learning Boise Democrat Nels Mitchell is running for the U.S. Senate seat he holds, Idaho Republican Jim Risch penned a fundraising letter to somebody named "Brad."

In it, Risch called Mitchell a "handpicked puppet" of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid then said "an immediate contribution of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more right now" would show "Harry Reid and Barack Obama that this seat is not in play."

Following an exhaustive search, the Post Register tracked down "Brad," who agreed to share his response to Sen. Risch with readers:

Sen. Risch,

Thank you for your letter. As a lifelong eastern Idahoan, I too am no fan of Harry Reid and President Obama. But this election isn't about them. It's about the job you've done and whether you deserve another six years in office.

To that end, allow me to pay you a compliment. When Obama was beating the war drums in Syria, you stood opposed. That was the right call and I thank you for it.

I must admit, however, to being troubled by some of your recent decisions. I'm employed by the Idaho National Laboratory and am confused by your vote to continue a government shutdown that could have resulted in me receiving a pink slip, as well as your vote on an appropriations bill that provides stable funding for nuclear research.

Do you really believe anyone is better served by having folks like me collecting unemployment checks as opposed to doing work important to our state and nation?

I share your concern about our national debt. And yet, here again, I am confused by your approach. If, in fact, we face the threat of economic collapse as you've said, why haven't you joined Congressman Simpson and Sen. Crapo in supporting a broad-based and politically possible approach to debt reduction? Would not a small tax increase for super rich folks like you be preferable to economic collapse?

Also, I recall that as governor you supported Simpson's effort to provide wilderness protection for the Boulder-White Cloud range. Now you oppose it, which matters a great deal because you serve on the committee that would debate it. Word is Obama may declare a national monument 200,000 acres larger than the compromise bill Idahoans spent a decade crafting. Compromise, sir, is not a dirty word.

Finally, Sen. Risch, your remarks to the Idaho Statesman's Dan Popkey last year were not lost upon us here in eastern Idaho. We took note of you saying how fun it was to attend the theatre and hang out with the First Lady and how it didn't matter whether you were in Boise or Washington, D.C., because nothing gets done anyway. Shouldn't we expect more for our \$174,000?

It's January, Sen. Risch. You have 10 months to rethink your approach to service and convince Idahoans you deserve another six years. I suggest you get started.

Sincerely,

"Brad."

JAN 28, 2014 Chris Carlson

## HOW NELS MITCHELL CAN MAKE IT A RACE

Because Idaho is considered the most Republican state in the nation few political prognosticators, whether in Idaho or the nation's capital, believe Boise attorney Nels Mitchell has a snowball's chance of defeating the long-serving Republican officeholder.

There's one big caveat, though, and that comes down to a question of money, as in: Can Mitchell raise enough to pound away on three vulnerabilities for which Sen. Jim Risch has no adequate response? If Mitchell can get the funding to saturate the major television markets with good ads exposing these "wounds," at a minimum he can make what many expect to be a runaway Risch victory into a much narrower race.

Here are three concepts for 60-second ads the Mitchell people ought to fine-tune and run:



Here are three concepts for 60-second ads the Mitchell people ought to fine-tune and run:

### **Ad No. 1: "You pay more taxes, Risch pays less."**

"Recall, folks, 2006 when then-Gov. Risch sold the Legislature a bill of goods about switching the one-quarter of public school funding that comes from property taxes to an increase in the sales tax.

"He claimed public education would lose nothing. He was wrong - they lost \$50 million and the evisceration of public school funding in Idaho accelerated significantly. Idaho's per-pupil spending now is 50th out of 51 states and the District of Columbia, behind even Mississippi.

"Risch claimed no personal benefit from the switch. In a one-day special legislative session in August, while most Idahoans were enjoying vacations, he rammed through the Legislature a bill he knew would lower his Idaho property taxes by at least \$4,000. He remained silent about his break while the vast majority got the shaft.

"He said if it could be proven he benefitted personally he would drop out of the race. The proof was submitted, but he's still sitting in the Senate.

"You can't afford Jim Risch and Idahoans can't trust Jim Risch. I'm Nels Mitchell and I authorized this message."

## **Ad No. 2 "Arrogance."**

"There is only one word that describes it: arrogance. In a December 2012 interview with the Idaho Statesman, Sen. Jim Risch said there was no sense working hard in Washington, D.C., because everything is so partisan only grid-lock thrives.

"He literally said the job was easy and he could coast forever unlike the seven months he spent as governor, which was hard and draining work.

"Idahoans expect high public elected officials to solve problems. Risch says they aren't solvable so sit back, relax and in effect play the fiddle while Rome burns. Idaho needs a working senator. I'm Nels Mitchell. I authorized this ad because I want to work for you."

## **Ad No. 3 "Junketing Jim."**

"While almost all Idaho families struggle to make ends meet, multi-millionaire Jim Risch globe-trots around the world on your dime or a special interest's. After all, he's on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Even his chief of staff has to take his own junkets.

"Meanwhile he votes no on increased funding for programs like Food Stamps, and no on extending benefits for the unemployed. After all, he has his nest feathered - he's in the top 15 of the list of the wealthiest members of Congress.

"Ask yourself this: Just what has Junketing Jim done for you lately? I'm Nels Mitchell and I authorized this ad."

~

Here's hoping Mitchell can raise the funds to saturate the air waves with messages like these. There's a reason why most folks, even some good Republicans, don't care for Risch or his politics of exclusion and self-service.

Go get him, Nels. Given a credible alternative, the voters may finally be tired of not having a senator that works.

## Testing Conventional Wisdom of Idaho Conservative Politics



National Public Radio recently called the race for Idaho's 2nd Congressional District a "bellwether" of the post-shutdown and fractured GOP's standing.

NPR is correct in its assertion that the race between Rep. Mike Simpson and tea party-backed Bryan Smith offers a glimpse into a larger political reality. It's an important round in a fight for the national Republican soul, a race that will enlighten observers about where the GOP will go from here. Unlike in previous "establishment vs. insurgent" races, Simpson has the very public backing of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which vocally said it had enough with the Republican right-flank during the costly federal government shutdown. The Chamber's support will largely cancel out the advertising spending by the Club for Growth and other ultra-conservative groups that back Smith. That alone makes this race worth watching.

But there's another statewide contest that, while unlikely to garner the attention of the Simpson-Smith primary, will also test just how conservative the people of Idaho really are.

Boise attorney Nels Mitchell earlier this month announced he will challenge an Idaho powerhouse: U.S. Sen. Jim Risch. The Democrat intends on taking it to the established Idaho politician and one-term senator by attempting to label him a member of the GOP fringe. Mitchell has a case. Any elected official has a history ripe for attack and Risch's voting record makes him one of the most conservative members of the Senate, according to govtrack.us, which scores political ideologies. Risch is substantially to the right of Sen. Mike Crapo, a fact that Mitchell has already targeted by noting that Risch voted against last year's reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, a bill Crapo co-sponsored.

Mitchell's pitch is less a test of Risch than a study of the ideologies of Idaho's electorate in a post-shutdown political reality. Even House Speaker John Boehner said last week on the Tonight Show that Washington's problems stem from the growing chasm between the two parties.

Risch has a lot going for him. He's well known and will raise a ton of cash now that he faces opposition. Mitchell has never before sought public office and, to be completely honest, is a Democrat in an increasingly "red" state.

But win, lose or draw, Mitchell's run will say a lot about Idaho. If he can draw double-digit support from moderate Republicans and pull a fair share of independents — an inordinately large number of voters in Idaho — he can prove that Risch's conservative record in the Senate is more divisive than "common sense" says.

Risch's campaign immediately fired back at Mitchell after the Democrat made his challenge known, calling the upstart a cherry-picked, liberal buddy of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. Unworried campaigns typically ignore challengers, opting to disregard the competition rather than legitimize it.

Risch's Democratic challenger wants to link the senator with the gridlock and dysfunction in Congress, which most of the country blames on the GOP's right flank. Only time will tell if the pitch makes Mitchell a viable candidate. But even if he fails, the results in November could scuttle the conventional wisdom that in Idaho politics the further right, the better.



# Idaho Statesman

By DAN POPKEY

dpopkey@idahostatesman.com

May 6, 2013

## Resigned to its dysfunction, Risch loves the Senate

Idaho Sen. Jim Risch celebrated his 70th birthday Friday, content in his likely re-election in 2014 to another six years where he can fine-tune his expertise on the Middle East and North Africa.

"You know, I really enjoy this job. I really like this job," Risch said last week, saying it's a breeze compared to the seven months he served as governor in 2006. "Governor will wear you down. You can't do that job permanently. This you can do ad infinitum."

Home for a Senate recess that included a visit with the Statesman editorial board, Risch was remarkably passive about the failure of Congress to deal with the country's problems, starting with a \$16 trillion debt.

"I can't explain to you how dysfunctional it is back there," Risch said, predicting it will take a catastrophe for the national

legislature to tackle its responsibilities. "They're really not bad when it comes to crisis. If there's a war, if there's, you know, like the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, those kinds of crises seem to bring people together."

Rather than stick his neck out like his Idaho GOP colleagues — Sen. Mike Crapo and Reps. Mike Simpson and Raul Labrador — Risch has avoided leadership on the debt crisis or immigration.

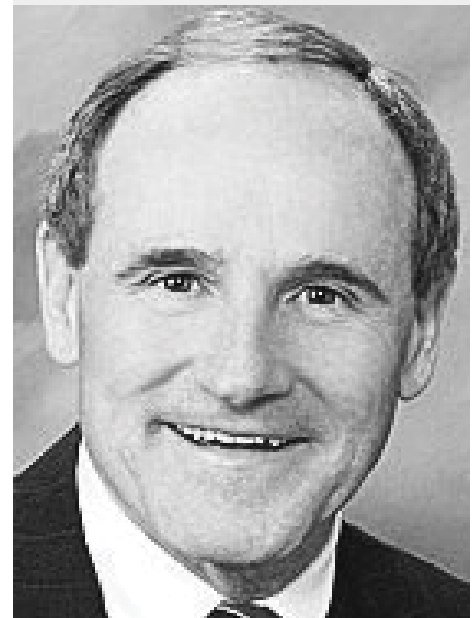
The biggest splash of his four-plus years came last month, when he was the voice of Republicans vowing a filibuster aimed at stalling votes on gun legislation, a sure-fire base builder for re-election.

Risch also is proud of employing a temporary block of President Barack Obama's nomination of Sally Jewell as Interior secretary. The tactic was meant to persuade the administration to embrace Gov. Butch Otter's plan to keep sage grouse off the endangered species list.

"If you've got a low tolerance for frustration with the governing process this isn't the job for you," Risch said. "You've got to learn to do the best you can, get what you can and move on."

Risch touts his role as the top Republican on the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs, which tracks North Africa and the Middle East. That's meant a lot of overseas trips for the senator and his staff.

On Syria, he says, "the president does not have good options," because supporting the rebellion against Syrian President Bashar Assad will mean "you're going to be having to sidle up to al-Qaida and some others that are not-so-savory characters."



The last Idaho senator to take such an interest in foreign affairs was Democrat Frank Church, who chaired the full committee and led the passage of the Panama Canal treaty. Church, after 24 years, was defeated in 1980 in significant part because Idahoans thought he'd caught "Potomac fever" and lost touch with Idaho.

Risch's conservative voting may inoculate him from such a malady. But to hear him wax eloquent about life in the Senate makes one wonder if he risks being branded as a dilettante.

With his wife, Vicki, at his side, Risch boasted about her membership on the board of Ford's Theater, where the couple entertain themselves "relatively frequently." Last year, Mrs. Risch chaired the luncheon for Michelle Obama, organized by Senate spouses. Their condo is on Pennsylvania Avenue, Risch said, allowing the pleasure of spectating at various misguided protests.

Despite the failure of the Senate to agree on matters vital to the nation's future, everybody gets along just swell, Risch reports.

"You hear about this toxic atmosphere," he said, but it's not like that when senators and their spouses get together. "We talk about our kids, we talk about sports. ... Socially, the people are incredibly, incredibly civil to each other."

Risch brushes off criticism the Senate takes too much time off from Washington. "There's nothing happening when we're back there and there's nothing happening when we're not back there. What's the difference?"

He chortles at the toothless threats of Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., to make the Senate work weekends. Said Risch, who spent about two decades as a leader in the Idaho Senate: "Can you imagine if I would have stood up on the floor as the majority leader and said, 'We're going to work this Saturday' and then not do it?"

Risch is nostalgic about his 22 years in the state Senate, 5 1/2 years as lieutenant governor and brief stint as governor. He wishes he could click his heels and transport 105 Idaho lawmakers to Washington. "Put them in charge and they'd straighten this thing out in a couple few months," he said. "They've got common sense. They can understand these things and they actually do stuff."

What I find odd about Risch's blithe spirit is how easily he's adapted after a lifetime of making things happen.

"When you wake up in the morning and you're governor they hand you a plate and it's pretty full and they say, 'Eat this.' And you've got to eat what's on the plate.

"That's one of the differences with this job. You can do a lot more of what you want to do. There's 100 senators, 435 congressmen; we all have our own ideas, our own passions in life. We all have our own interests and you can pursue them."