

Coulter proves she's clueless about Crapo

Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune

Conservative commentator Ann Coulter says a lot of weird and crazy things.

Add this one to the list.

Presumptive GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump should pick U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, as his choice to be vice president.

Coulter placed Crapo among the likes of Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, former Sen. Scott Brown, R-Mass., and North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory - people she says would stay true to Trump's agenda "on immigration, a warrior to defend our country from the rich's predatory demands for cheap foreign labor. His running mate also needs to be smart, courageous and not in love with his own press notices."

Where would Coulter conjure up such an idea?

Has she heard that Crapo's affable demeanor aside, he is one of the most dependable conservative votes in the U.S. Senate? His seatmate, Jim Risch, gets more attention for getting ranked as the most conservative member of that body, but Crapo makes the top 10. That could help persuade Republicans who remain skeptical about Trump's ideological bona fides.

Or has Coulter figured on Crapo - the only Westerner on her list and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - solving Trump's "Mormon problem"?

If Trump's flamboyant lifestyle - three marriages and his profanity - and his disdain for immigrants and Muslims didn't alienate Mormons, then his description of the LDS faith as "alien" during a 2014 interview probably did. It cost him Idaho and Utah during the GOP presidential primary season.

But why would Crapo even consider it?

He didn't endorse Trump until the nomination battle was over and he had no choice.

Idaho does not have a Lyndon law - the quirky Texas provision that allowed then-U.S. Sen. Lyndon Johnson to simultaneously seek re-election while running as Democratic presidential nominee John F. Kennedy's running mate in 1960. So Trump theoretically would be asking Crapo to relinquish the safe incumbency he has enjoyed for 23 years in exchange for the second spot on a risky national ticket.

Perhaps Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter will gavel the Legislature into special session between now and Nov. 8 to pass a "Mike law." But if you think that's hard to imagine, consider why a fellow as cautious as Crapo would embark on a bold political venture bordering on the reckless.

If the GOP ticket wins, Crapo would find himself tied to such radical policies as building a wall along the southern border, employing a religious test for immigration and challenging the credentials of a federal judge because of his ethnicity.

And if Trump loses, he merely goes back to Trump Tower.

Crapo has to finish out his legislative career with the stench of Trump permeating his every move.

Crapo, a Harvard-trained attorney, also has to know he'd become the junior partner to a candidate who has openly advocated breaking the First Amendment by expanding libel laws to enable public officials to intimidate the media as well as the Fifth Amendment's due process clause and the 14th Amendment's equal protection doctrine.

Don't dismiss the matter of Crapo's political allies - the same Wall Street types Trump successfully played as his foil during the primary season. Serving on the Senate banking and finance committees has enabled Crapo to draw on the financial sector for a substantial portion of his \$4.7 million re-election campaign account balance. According to Opensecrets.org, the Idaho Republican collected \$509,950 from the securities and investment sector, another \$419,050 from insurance companies and \$285,400 from commercial banks.

Crapo is certainly keeping his distance. His spokesman Lindsay Nothern, says nobody's talking.

"We have not been contacted," Nothern said. "We have not been asked by Trump about any spot in his administration."

But there's a kernel of legitimacy in Coulter's provocative yarn: You can see what's in it for Trump.

How any of this helps Crapo, however, is something she hasn't wasted too much time thinking about. - M.T.