



SALI – MINNICK REMATCH?

As news comes that former Rep. Bill Sali has filed for a possible campaign bid against freshman Democrat Walt Minnick, Republican voters may well have a fairly simple choice to make in the 2010 primary.

The House Republicans this week voted unanimously against the gargantuan and futile stimulus bill – massive increases in government spending didn't work in the 1930s and they won't work today – but didn't find their voice until it was too late to do any good. Where have these fiscal conservatives been for the last eight years, when they colluded with a Republican president to drive spending up by more than 50% over the Clinton era?

(Rep. Mike Pence, who has been a conservative stalwart, said yesterday the vote showed that “Republicans ... are finding their voice and getting into the fight.” Good news, but way too late. The time to fight is when you still have a chance to win.)

And while Walt Minnick cast a fiscally conservative vote on the stimulus bill, Idaho voters should not forget that both he and Republican Mike Simpson just voted for a \$32.8 billion blotation of the SCHIP bill, which will be funded by a regressive tax on low income Americans, requires 22.4 million Americans to develop a smoking habit to pay for it, will potentially force you and me to pay for health care coverage for families in other states who make \$88,000, and is a giant step toward socialized medicine in America.

The point here is quite simple: given our current moral and financial crisis as a nation, Idaho conservatives in the first congressional district need to be absolutely sure they send a social and fiscal conservative back to D.C. in 2010.

While Minnick is casting fiscally conservative votes on occasion, he is firmly and unapologetically pro-abortion. We are way past the time as a country where we can afford to send a politician back to Washington who believes that dismembering babies in the womb is acceptable behavior. It is shameful to all Idahoans that we have sent a man back to D.C. who will vote every time he can to protect and expand such a practice.

Other possible GOP candidates for this race include Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden, former State Controller Keith Johnson, and current Senate Transportation Committee chairman John McGee.

There is no question each will try to convince GOP voters that he is a rock-ribbed, genuine, died-in-the-DNA conservative. But we know little about Wasden's political philosophy, McGee tends to be a social moderate, and Johnson has not been in a position to set policy on these matters, so we know little about what his functional political philosophy will be when it comes time to cast a vote.

The great need in conservative circles right now is for vertebrate Republicans, lawmakers who will take a backbone back to D.C. rather than waiting for a crisis of unprecedented magnitude to reveal whether they even have one.

The question for GOP primary voters in the spring of 2010 may well be this: do I vote for the guy whom I know will take a spine with him to Washington, or do I take a flyer on a guy I hope has one, and gamble that he'll find it when he gets to D.C.?