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Regional GOP leaders adopt resolution and urge Risch: "Bring Our Troops Home"

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BOISE, Idaho — Leaders of the Republican Party in Ada County Tuesday night unanimously adopted a resolution urging Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Sen. Jim Risch, R-Id., and the rest of Idaho's all-Republican Congressional delegation to "advocate for and vote in favor of legislation and resolutions that call for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Middle East and ending the war in Afghanistan."

The resolution was submitted for consideration by GOP Region 4 secretary Matthew K. Jensen of Boise and authored by Canyon County state Rep. Tammy Nichols, R-Middleton, a graduate of Boise High School and an early supporter of the BringOurTroopsHome.US movement founded in January by Afghanistan veteran Dan McKnight of Meridian.

"I'm grateful to Republican leaders in our most populous county for taking a leadership role — on behalf of Idaho's brave men and women in uniform — in urging Sen. Risch and our entire Congressional delegation to bring our troops home from the Middle East and other war zones," Nichols said.

She said Region 4 is the first Republican committee in the state to consider the resolution, which she and others will also be presenting to other GOP regional, county, and youth organizations across the state for their consideration.

"I know there's strong support among Republicans statewide for bringing our troops home from these endless wars," Nichols said, citing a national poll by Politico in January which found that 81 percent of voters who supported President Donald Trump in 2016 support withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan, and 76 percent of Trump voters support withdrawing U.S. troops from Syria.

McKnight — a veteran of the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and Idaho Army National Guard who served a tour of duty in Afghanistan from 2005 to 2007, including in the Korengal Valley, referred to as "The Valley of Death" — praised Nichols and GOP leaders for their leadership.

"As the resolution approved by local GOP leaders says, we've been fighting in the Middle East for over 18 years at a cost of 7,000 American lives, more than 52,000 wounded; and over \$7 trillion out of American taxpayers' pockets," McKnight said. "We agree with what President Trump said in his last State of the Union Address, that after two decades of war, it's time to at least try for peace and give our troops a warm welcome home."

McKnight's efforts thus far have won support from members of both major political parties in Idaho. A town hall meeting last month at Boise State University was sponsored

by both the BSU College Republicans and BSU Young Democrats and featured McKnight, Nichols, and former Congressman Larry LaRocco, D-Id.

Republican Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin is also working with McKnight to advance the movement, intended to demonstrate to Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Risch in particular — given his powerful position of influence on U.S. foreign policy — that there is broad support in Idaho, including from his own party, for withdrawing U.S. troops from the Middle East.

Risch seemed to agree with McKnight's efforts during comments to the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce in February.

"I agree with you," Risch said in response to McKnight during a question and answer period. "Let me tell you why I share your feelings in that regard."

"We've spent \$2 trillion in Afghanistan, and we've shed lots and lots of American blood there," Risch said. "I'm with you. I am through trying to do nation-building with countries that don't want it! They've got to show some type of an appreciation, some type of an embracement of it, and they simply don't."

McKnight said while he appreciates Risch's words of encouragement, he is disappointed that Risch has voted four times in the last six

months against withdrawing U.S. troops from war zones in the Middle East.

"I believe that in his heart, he is with us," McKnight said. "But that's the point of these resolutions and our other activities, to demonstrate to Sen. Risch that if he'll use his position of influence to become a leader in changing our forever war policy of the last two decades, it's not only the right thing to do, not only what he says he wants to do, but is politically the only way he can represent most Idahoans, including those of his own party."

McKnight said he and other supporters will be taking the resolution approved by Region 4 Republicans to other GOP groups statewide, and also to local Democrat organizations.

The Idaho Republican Party is divided into seven regions, each comprised of multiple counties except for Region 4, the most populous, which is comprised of all legislative districts in Ada County.

Voting members of the GOP Region 4 Committee include region chairman Brock Frazier of Boise, Ada County Republican Party chair Ryan Davidson, Kuna, and other elected officers of the Ada County GOP, the county's GOP state committeeman and committeewoman, state youth committeeperson, and chairs of the GOP committees for the 14th through 22nd legislative districts.