

IDAHO FEDERATION OF COLLEGE REPUBLICANS

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BSU students to urge Risch: "Bring our troops home"

College Democrats and College Republicans to cosponsor April 24th event

BOISE, ID. -- Despite an era of sometimes toxic partisan divide, one issue is bringing Democrats and Republicans together, at least on the campus of Boise State University. BSU's College Democrat and College Republican organizations are cosponsoring an April 24th forum on campus at which both will express support for urging Idaho's U.S. Sen. Jim Risch, chairman of the influential U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to bring American troops home from what they call "endless wars" in the Middle East and Africa.

The forum at 6:00 p.m. in the BSU Student Union Building is open to the public and will feature former Idaho Army National Guard Sgt. Dan McKnight, Meridian, a veteran of Afghanistan and founder of BringOurTroopsHome.US. Other speakers of both parties have been invited.

The campus political groups are part of a growing coalition led by McKnight that's scheduling events around the state and working with Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin, R-Idaho Falls, to submit a resolution to the legislature that will urge Idaho's Congressional delegation -- and Risch in particular -- to support ending "forever wars" in the Middle East.

McKnight noted that a Politico poll in January found that a majority of Americans, and over 70 percent of Republicans, supported President Trump's call to remove troops from Syria, a move also supported by every Democratic member of the U.S. Senate who's running for president.

"Our purpose is to demonstrate to Sen. Risch and our entire Congressional delegation that bringing our troops home from endless wars is not only the right thing to do, but one which has broad public support from Idahoans," McKnight said.

"Sen. Risch is in a position that affords Idahoans, Democrats and Republicans alike, a fighter's chance at effecting change in our nation's foreign policy," said BSU College Democrats chairman Joe Goode. "To have a senator from a small state like Idaho sitting in such a powerful position gives Idahoans unusual leverage."

Risch during a Boise Chamber of Commerce luncheon in February expressed sympathy for the movement.

"We've spent \$2 trillion in Afghanistan, and we've shed lots and lots of American blood there," Risch told Chamber members in response to a question from McKnight. "I'm with you. I am through trying to do nation-building with countries that don't want it."

However, one week later, Risch contradicted those sentiments, movement leaders say, voting against a resolution approved with by the U.S. Senate with bipartisan support that sought to withdraw American troops from Yemen, a war-torn country on the Arabian peninsula.

"In today's toxic and vitriol political climate, I can think of only a few issues where progressive Democrats and conservative Republicans can work together for a common goal," BSU College Republican chairman Pryce Robinson said. "Ending these forever wars is not an 'anti-war' position but rather an attempt to return to following the U.S. Constitution, which gives Congress the power to declare war, and Congress alone."

Goode and Robinson co-host "Crossing the Aisle," a program on BSU's University Pulse Radio that airs Wednesdays from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. The focus of the program is to recognize areas where Republicans and Democrats can find common ground and work together.