The election eye . . .

Church's entry draws clear-cut battle lines

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The formal entry Wednesday night of Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, for re-election clearly draws the battle lines between him and Republican Congressman Steve Symms.

In his announcement, which generally followed the statements he made to 100 campaign workers in Idaho Falls Tuesday night, he has demonstrated that his campaign will be based on the many beneficial pieces of legislation he has brought to Idaho, while Symms' record of eight years in Congress has produced nothing.

Church also replied to Symms' charge that he, Church, does not represent Idaho in Washington. In rebuttal, he then cites Symms record, which, if true, is dismal indeed.

In the last three Congresses and in the present one so far, Church says Symms introduced a total of 133 bills and not a single one has been enacted.

Symms earlier took cognizance of this and replied that much of his effort was concentrated in committee work and in attaching amendments to other bills that brought positive results.

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Church said some of the beneficial bills he has sponsored and enacted into law include saving railroad passenger service in South Idaho, restoring oral lumber bidding, updating reclamation laws to prevent thousands of Idaho farms from being split up and the Reclamation Act that the livestock industry hails as the best in 40 years.

He further pointed out he obtained a moratorium against diversion of Idaho water into other states and then got it renewed for another decade, settled a bitter feud in classification of the St. Joe River, the Gospel Hump Wilderness, and in settling a controversy in the River of No Return.

Church said he enumerated some of these actions in response to Symms assertion he wants to compare records.

Church further charges that Symms is so far out of the philosophical mainstream of either party that his colleagues ignore him.

As an example, he says Symms voted against diabetes research, which was passed 380 to 6; drug abuse prevention, passed 382 to 11; and aid to the mentally retarded and cerebral palsy, approved 236 to 5.

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The bottom line, of course, is that Church and Symms differ philosophically, but records would indicate that Church, with 24 years in the Senate, is highly effective, while Symms is not.

The issues are thus placed into focus — that Symms is a member of a small, tight band of Republicans who consistently oppose programs, while Church is more moderate and many say, a liberal. Thus, the people of Idaho can choose who they want. They should know the capabilities of each and their voting records.

Church asserts the mounting inflation rates are largely due to soaring OPEC oil prices and swollen profits of the oil companies. He says the European and Arabian nations now are buying American land and property and the American oil companies are acquiring other businesses.

Symms charges deficit budgets have caused much of these rising costs. Church contends even a balanced budget, which appears likely this year, would only affect the inflation factor by less than 2 percent, perhaps 1 percent.

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The campaign has yet to commence in earnest, and the announcements from the two candidates are only the preliminary, leading to the main event.

Church already has raised close to $1,000,000 and Symms is expected to do nearly as well, as the campaign intensifies.

The Anybody But Church Committee is also a factor, but whether it will help or hurt Church remains a moot point. Church charges the oil companies are financing ABC in hopes of beating him, a statement committee director Don Todd denies.

Church has asked Symms to repudiate ABC, saying Indiana Republicans asked the Virginia-based National Conservative Political Action Committee, parent group of the ABC, to get out in its battle against Democratic Sen. Birch Bayh.

He says bluntly, Symms "doesn't have the guts to do so," adding it's the strategy of Symms to take the high road and the ABC the low road."

Now, it's for the voters to decide what road they choose.

Post-Register/Don Skitt

Stresses differences

SEN. FRANK CHURCH, D-Idaho, formally announcing his candidacy for a fifth six-year term Wednesday, outlined what he said were clear-cut differences between himself and his Republican opponent, Congressman Steve Symms.