

The election eye . . .

Extreme factions aid Sen. Church campaign

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Perhaps the best thing Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, has going for him in his re-election campaign is the opposition of extremist factions who are freely distorting his views, policies and voting record.

The list is long, but in their zeal to attempt to oust the senator, who they consider too liberal for Idaho and the nation, they are using tactics that are backfiring in his favor.

It can't help but make unhappy his most apparent formidable challenger, Republican Rep. Steve Symms, and most solid responsible Republican leaders, who view the early campaign with dismay.

Symms and another probable Republican challenger, Jim Jones, Burley attorney, who turned in a creditable performance in contesting U.S. Rep. George Hansen last year, feel there are enough legitimate issues against Church, without resorting to what they feel is dirty politics.

Symms pointed out truthfully that on nearly every issue he and Church stand diametrically opposed which should give people a clear choice.

This is the case on virtually every major issue — SALT II, Panama Canal Treaty, Chinese agreement, Middle East, Amtrak and many phases of the energy, gasoline rationing, oil allocation and inflation programs.

Jones, a rather low-key campaigner who might become a viable force in Idaho if political winds shift in his favor, also deplores the extremists' present tactics against Church. He asserts that he believes there is enough in Church's record that most Idaho people would not like.

"I think you can be fair to him (Church) and still beat him on the issues," said Jones in a recent interview. "I don't think for the most part that his voting record is in keeping with what Idahoans want."

The latest and perhaps the most scurrilous piece of political demagoguery aimed against Church was the mailing of a group styling itself as "Stop the Baby Killers." It lists as honorary chairman Congressman Hansen, who said he didn't know the specifics of the cam-

paign, but did lend his name, as he thought the effort was basically sound.

The anti-abortion mailing calls Church a "baby killer." It claims he believes it is perfectly fine to slaughter unborn infants by abortion, that he holds a position on abortion that condones "murder," and that he votes pro-abortion.

Church has repeatedly stated his abortion stand, which likely represents the view of nearly all those opposed to abortion — that he is against abortion except in cases of incest, rape or where life of the mother is in jeopardy. Instead, he favors adoption.

Thus it is no surprise that Cleve Corlett, Church's press secretary, brands the mailing as "outlandish, bald-faced lies."

Jones also laments such types of literature and believes it may weaken Hansen to such an extent that he, Jones, might renew his primary challenge against Hansen if he finds his chances are slim to beat Symms as the Republican senatorial nominee.

This latest effort is believed part of a nationwide radical right wing effort to discredit the senior senator from Idaho.

But there are others who also are waging a somewhat similar campaign.

One of the earliest is the Anybody But Church, known as ABC, headed by Don Todd, campaign manager in the losing gubernatorial efforts of Republican Allan F. Larsen in 1978.

The abrasive Todd even went so far as to say that he would support Secretary of Interior and former Idaho Gov. Cecil D. Andrus against Church, which, of course, is of little possibility.

Todd has now transferred his ABC efforts to the National Conservative Political Action Committee based at Arlington, Va., a step Idahoans may resent as out-of-state interference, much as the "baby killers" diabolize.

Then there's the Committee for Positive Action, which also wants to see Church ousted, regardless of who does it. This committee is headed by Helen Chenoweth, who must be somewhat chagrined that she may find herself supporting Symms, who fired her and his top assistant, Bob Smith, from his staff last year.

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This committee already has attracted donations of \$600 from Dr. Don Grimes, Rexburg, and \$100 from Floyd Skelton, Idaho Falls.

This committee's latest action is to distribute literature against Church which distorts his views by taking statements out of context.

East Idaho members of this committee include Sen. Marsden Williams, Idaho Falls, Joe Treasure, Rigby, Rep. Darwin Young, Blackfoot, and Bill Turnbull, Rexburg.

Symms also has formed an "Exploratory Committee" of some 50 people, leading to his probable senatorial effort. East Idaho members include two Idaho Falls businessmen, Forde Johnson and Paul Ahlstrom, plus Allan Larsen and Milton Eberhardt, Blackfoot; Sen. Mark G. Ricks, Rexburg; and Jim Siddoway, Tetonian rancher.

This committee, however, is a no-nonsense Symms effort and not part of the radical syndrome.

Then there's a coalition of conservative members of the Idaho Legislature aimed against Church. This group is headed by the most radical right member of the Legislature, Rep. Lyman Gene Winchester, R-Kuna, and also is tied in with a national organization, the National Conservative Caucus, also based at Arlington, Va. It is made up of some 20 House Republicans.

Then for fillers, Joel Miller, Idaho Falls, circulated petitions last year signed by some 6,000 asking for Church's resignation, an offer Church had graciously refused. Miller vowed he would renew the activity later, presumably during the coming campaign.

Even the staid National Republican Senatorial Committee is worried over this radical right effort in its aim to oust Church. It sent committee members to Idaho two months ago to survey the situation.

Perhaps if Symms were free to conduct his own campaign he could do well but with friends like these right extremists, he doesn't need enemies.