

Stallings confident of re-election to House seat

By BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register columnist

Democratic Congressman Richard Stallings, believing he is marking up an enviable congressional record, is confident he can win re-election in 1986, no matter who is the Republican nominee.

"People are telling me to keep up the good work," he said while in Idaho Falls this week enroute to speak to a nursery landscape meeting at Jackson, Wyo.

"They believe I am representing them fairly in voting for necessary programs and for cutting the budget deficits and unnecessary government expenses."

Stallings, looking self-assured after eight months in office, pointed out he is a member of the Democratic Study Group, made up of about 50 of the more conservative Democrats in the House. In addition, about 50 others also vote along conservative lines, providing the winning margin on many bills.

"I think I have shown the people of Idaho's Second Congressional District that I can represent them effectively as a conservative Democrat," he said. "I am proud of my record and I intend to keep it up. I am especially conservative when it comes to fiscal matters, but a little more moderate on such issues as Social Security and human service programs which help the common people."

Stallings said he knows the Republicans will attempt to say he is cancelling out the votes of 1st District Congressman Larry Craig, but he said his critics are in for a surprise.

Aside from votes on the Congressional Journal which Craig and some of the right wing Republicans vote against as a partisan protest, Stallings said he has voted similarly to Craig more than 50 percent of the time. The two work closely together on matters of Idaho interest, he said.

"I feel my votes are more for the people of Idaho than are Craig's," said Stallings. "For example I voted for farm credit and against the MX missile, while Craig voted just opposite."



Richard Stallings

Stallings said he is amused at charges that House Speaker Tip O'Neill is influencing his vote for liberal legislation.

"As a matter of fact, President Ronald Reagan has attempted to influence my vote more than has O'Neill," said Stallings. "My only contact with Mr. O'Neill has been to exchange greetings. Not once has he ever attempted to tell me how to vote. The president has called me personally on three occasions to solicit my vote. They were for votes on the MX missile, Nicaragua funding and farm credit legislation. I have been obliged to vote for what I thought represented the views of Idaho constituents and against him. He thanked me, anyway."

Stallings said he also favors sanctions against South Africa for its apartheid policies, but was not present for a House vote on that measure.

He said he did back Reagan for so-called "constructive policy" regarding South Africa, but he thinks that something stronger must be done. He also wants to go beyond Reagan's latest proposals of limited sanctions.

"There is no way that five million whites will dominate 23 million blacks in South Africa," he said. "It seems to me a blood bath is inevitable."

On other issues, Stallings said he favors cost-of-living increases for Social Security, increased funding for several important projects at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, and some federal subsidies for farmers.

Stallings said he is pressing vigorously for the Superconducting Super Collider, also known as the Desertron. He said it could mean an additional 10,000 jobs in eastern Idaho.

He also is promoting the New Production Reactor, a multi-million facility to provide more weapons-grade tritium and possibly plutonium for nuclear weapons.

The Farm Bill for 1985, he said, will help stop present farm losses for sugar beets and wheat.

"The biggest obstacle to helping the farmers is the White House," he said. "Many Republican senators are fearful of a farmer backlash because of Reagan's opposition to beneficial farm legislation."

He said under present plans, it is possible to effect a \$20 billion savings in the wheat program and still assist farmers substantially. The House version proposes spending some \$50 billion or more for agriculture programs through 1988, he said.

Regarding his probable Republican opponent, he said "I don't see much difference among them. The one who can put up the most amount of money likely will win."

He said former U.S. Rep. George Hansen will win the GOP nomination, if he enters the race and there is a field of three or more.

"Hansen has his devout followers who will stick with him," said Stallings.

He also pointed out that Hansen's wife, Connie, also could enter if her husband chooses not to.

He said two Idaho Falls legislators, Sen. Dane Watkins and Rep. J. F. Chadband, could probably raise more money. He added the latest probable entry, Dan Adamson, Jerome attorney, who barely lost to Hansen in the 1984 Republican primary "at least has some issues."

Others mentioned in the race include Melvin Richardson, Idaho Falls radio executive; and Idaho legislators Sen. Ann Rydalem, Idaho Falls, and Rep. Gary Robbins, Dietrich.

Stallings said he already has about \$60,000 in his warchest with the aim of raising about \$300,000, about the same as last year. Stallings said his main appeal will be to the Democrats, independents and moderate Republicans in attempting to score another victory.

He said the Republicans, mostly with outside money, plan to spend \$1 million or perhaps \$1.5 million in an attempt to win back the seat.