



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on April 24, 2012

Election 2012: Marvin “Chick” Heilesen v. Rep. Mike Simpson in Idaho

That final vote won Simpson a four-way primary battle in the midst of Tea Party fervor during 2010, which he barely won with 58 percent of the vote. Second in the 2010 field was Heilesen, with nearly a quarter of the primary vote. This year, Heilesen will be Simpson's only primary challenger.



Vietnam veteran Heilesen had served in the district as an organizer for the conservative John Birch Society for 15 years and has been endorsed by several local Tea Party organizations. “I'm going there to vote against all the things my opponent's for, against bailouts and higher taxes,” Heilesen told *The New American*, stressing Simpson's record of voting for the TARP bill and breaking his pledge not to vote for tax increases. Heilesen stresses The John Birch Society's values of strict adherence to the U.S. Constitution and reluctance to get into unnecessary and unwinnable counter-insurgency wars without definitions of victory. “I believe the principles of limited government, separation of powers, and federalism found in the Constitution are still relevant today,” he affirms.

Heilesen remains an underdog, like any challenger against a well-funded congressional incumbent. And Simpson is well-funded, though two-thirds of his \$715,000 raised thus far come from Political Action Committees. Many of Simpson's contributions are from outside the district. Heilesen likes his chances in the May 15 Idaho primary. “It looks fairly good,” he says of his electoral math. Of the 42 percent of primary voters who opposed Simpson in 2010, Heilesen said “we're considering all those votes anti-Simpson.” He expects votes from the district's conservatives, adding that the primary math is that Idaho's open primary system is expected to draw in 16-32 percent of independent and Democratic crossover voters, whom he hopes to win with his non-interventionist foreign policy and defense of domestic civil liberties.

Heilesen also told *The New American* he plans on working toward a constitutionalist coalition in the House if sent to Congress. “Voting against things is not the whole solution. You've got to go across the aisle and build coalitions. You've got to convince the others. I don't think it would be a hard thing at all convincing people, because in a crisis period, people negotiate better. Even if you can't convince them on the constitution argument, the common sense argument is persuasive.”



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