

Election ✓

2004

3RD DISTRICT GOP

The 3rd District U.S. House of Representatives race pits a candidate who would repeal the Social Security Act against incumbent Rep. Mark Souder, who wouldn't. William Larsen said the current program is not sustainable and the Old Age Survivors Insurance program could be repealed. Souder said he is committed to protecting those already on Social Security. He supports an amendment that would define marriage as between a man and a woman. Larsen agreed, saying if same-sex unions are allowed they should be called something other than marriage.

— **Cindy Larson**

**3rd District
U.S. Representative**

Term: Two years, beginning Jan. 1

Annual salary: \$157,000

Duties: Represent district in U.S. House of Representatives; serve on various House committees as assigned by speaker; maintain office in district for constituent services; handle constituent concerns with various federal offices; sponsor bills and vote on legislation

William Larsen

Republican

Age: 48

Address: 1924 Brandywine Trail

Occupation: Mechanical engineer, Goshen Coach in Elkhart

Education: Bachelor's of science degree, mechanical engineering



Mark Souder

Republican

Age: 53

Address: Allen County

Occupation: U.S. representative for Indiana's 3rd District
Education: Leo High School; Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne; University of Notre Dame



Note: Souder was not able to be interviewed personally; he e-mailed his responses while vacationing with family.

Iraq

U.S. military in Iraq need to be better equipped, Larsen said. U.S. helicopters should be equipped with anti-missile technology, and all Humvees there should be armor-protected. "Those people are putting their lives on the line, and we should not skimp on a few dollars," he said. "If you're going into combat take your best stuff." Larsen believes it would be a mistake to leave the country now in such disarray. "I think we need to stay there until it's stabilized."

"Since Sept. 11, 2001, we have eliminated regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan that fund and promote terrorism. Already, the world has seen that Libya's dictator, Moammar Gadhafi — not wanting to be found in a spider hole like Saddam Hussein — has said he will give up his nuclear weapons program," Souder said. "The United States is providing the people of Iraq and Afghanistan with the tools for democracy, and I hope they make use of those tools."

Social Security

This is Larsen's key issue, one he's studied extensively. His solution would be to submit legislation to repeal the Social Security Act of 1937 covering the Old Age Survivors Insurance Program. All workers would retain their Social Security contributions up to that point. The 5.3 percent employer's contribution would go into a self-directed investment. As for the elderly who fall into poverty after repeal of the Social Security Act, Larsen said they can use food stamps, Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

"I am committed to keeping the government's promise to protect those who are already drawing Social Security benefits," he said. "In addition, I support the creation of Social Security savings accounts, which would allow individuals to set aside and invest tax-free savings for their own retirement needs. These savings accounts would serve as a supplement to the Social Security benefits already being drawn by retirees."

Same-sex marriage

"The common definition (of marriage) is between a man and a woman," Larsen said. "If we have a new type of union we should come up with a new name." If some kind of gay marriage is made legal, Larsen doesn't believe those couples should have the same tax advantages as traditional families, who, he said, have children who are an investment for the future.

"I am a co-sponsor of the Federal Marriage Amendment because the traditional reasons for marriage are under attack, and therefore the institution itself is threatened. By finding a fictitious 'right' in the Constitution for homosexuals to marry, liberal activist judges in Massachusetts are pursuing an agenda that will likely be imposed on every state of the union," he said. "I will continue to work to ensure that marriage in this nation consists only of the union of one man and one woman."

Thoughts and philosophies

Larsen would like to change the law to protect employees from being cheated from their pensions, 401k plans and profit sharing. He doesn't want companies to be able to lay off workers shortly before they're vested in a retirement or savings plan. "If the company leaves you, I want the employee to be vested," he said. He also would require employers to assure payroll checks can be cashed at the institution on which they're drawn without fees or surcharges.

"I am committed to keeping our taxes low to stimulate the economy. Interest rates and inflation must be kept down, too," he said. "Supplementing this, I am working to foster economic development in northeast Indiana by helping to provide the necessary tools at the local level. I have secured substantial funding over the years for area airports and highways to help expand our capacity for commercial activity."