



Photo from South Bend Tribune.

The Indiana race features Joe Donnelly, [a conservative Democrat](#), against Richard Mourdock, a Tea Party Republican. Both are more conservative than their counterparts in other competitive Senate races.

I discussed Mourdock briefly in a [post](#) about Tea Party candidates. He stands out for his endorsement of the view that climate change is a hoax. This claim goes well beyond both his party's presidential candidate and Republican Senate candidates in other competitive states. Most of them speak of "uncertainty" rather than using the "H" word.

He doesn't repeat this claim on his campaign website, but he does endorse fossil fuel production and tout his scientific expertise:

*As a geologist, Richard will bring a much-needed scientific perspective to a debate dominated by lawyers and politicians. Richard believes in creating jobs and economic opportunity by unleashing our Nation's natural resource potential. He opposes any type of job killing "cap and trade" or other similar legislation as proposed by the Obama administration.*

Mourdock has a Master of Arts in Geology from Ball State and considerable experience in oil and coal geology, including a [somewhat mysterious spell](#) as a consultant. (I emailed his campaign to ask for more information about the consulting firm. Although I never received an answer, the inquiry did get me added to his emailing list.)

Mourdock is also virulently anti-regulatory and [says](#) that to get the economy going we need to "get the jackboot of regulation off the throats of small businesses."

Mourdock's opponent, Joe Donnelly, endorses all forms of energy development. He points out that "we already have coal in southwestern Indiana, oil in northwest Indiana, and wind in central Indiana; so we know what a job creator the energy industry can be." He also calls for more oil and gas leasing. His congressional [website](#) expresses concerns about how climate change legislation would impact Indiana, as a state that relies heavily on coal for electricity. He has, however, strongly supported renewable energy initiatives. The website also [says](#) that "responsible resource management—especially soil and water—are critical to protecting environmental quality as well as preserving our ability to farm productively."

Like the other competitive races, this one is significant in part because of its potential

impact on control of the Senate, which in turn has implications for environmental issues. In terms of specific votes, the big difference between Mourdock and Donnelly is probably their attitudes toward renewable energy.