

Column submittal of 11/01/18 by David Kruse, President, CommStock Investments

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My Congressman is Steve King. He is famous or infamous, however, you look at it. Wikipedia says that "he is a staunch opponent of immigration and multiculturalism, and has stirred controversy with racist or racially charged comments as well as support for European right-wing politicians accused of racism and islamophobia."

He doesn't like immigrants, legal or otherwise, thinks human advancement is all the result of western civilization and has deaf ears to the issues of the Ag sector in his district. I would think that would be a little tough to have the grandkids read that stuff about you in the encyclopedia. There are not too many Congressional districts where an out-of-the-closet white supremacist can get re-elected, but he has made good use of his jerrymandered district. Representatives like King can stay comfortably in office because of the lopsided party registration, never being made accountable for their actions or lack of them. In King's case it is both, as he spends most of his time championing his ideological beliefs on cable news networks he has little time for real work on constituent issues. He has become such a pariah for his extreme views that he has not advanced in his party hierarchy and legislation that he is associated with is dead before arrival in the House.

First elected in 2003, he has had one insignificant bill pass with his name on it. He had a good piece of legislation that I supported, called the King Amendment, that advanced the commerce clause so that state laws could not be used in a protectionist manner to block goods from one state from being sold in another. California was passing state laws that regulated production that barred Iowa Ag products from that market. The King amendment died in conference committee. King succeeded Tom Latham as our Congressman. I felt that had that legislation been labeled the Latham amendment, it would be law. In other words, King has alienated just about everybody in Washington and elsewhere except his core base of ideological supporters back in his Iowa district and in other Anglo-Saxon cultural nations.

His latest news-worthy event, as reported by the Sioux City Journal, was to endorse a right-wing white supremacist for Mayor of Toronto, Canada. I am rolling my eyes, as what that had to do with our district in NW Iowa, I have no idea. The Journal subsequently endorsed his opponent JD Scholten. When King first ran for Congress in 2003 I supported him. In fact, he came to my office in Royal and along with a small group of farmers we briefed him on Ag issues. He professed to know little about agriculture and I thought that it went well. However, when it came time to vote he did not take what I thought were correct positions. What eventually became obvious is that he voted the way donors wanted him to. We had a parting of the ways. At that time, he was still in the closet over his white supremacist/anti-immigrant leaning. The one piece of advice that I gave him on Ag issues was that if he was on the fence, then look how Senator Chuck Grassley was leaning and vote like Grassley.

Agriculture has never had any better friend than Grassley. It appears to me that Joni Ernst has figured that one out and is serving us well with Grassley. They have been great champions for the ethanol industry while Steve King strongly supported Ted Cruz which is the biofuel industry's primary arch nemesis and was responsible for persuading Trump to undermine the RFS with RIN waivers. The way that I heard it, King promised us that Cruz would not hurt

ethanol and that was surely false as we can now see. King is the worst representative the ethanol industry has in the Iowa delegation.

When a congressional seat is considered nearly unwinnable, the Democrats typically cannot find good candidates nor will put many resources into the campaign. I am happy to say that this year is an exception. Ironically, I noted that I had briefed King on Ag issues on his first run for the US House. I recently briefed his opponent in the current race, JD Scholten on Ag issues. I thought that it went well. Deja Vue.

I generally do not see Ag issues in a partisan way as some people do and as an independent will advise anyone of either party on what the Ag sector needs. I spent a full hour alone with him in the Lantern coffee shop in Sibley. We went through a list of my notes on Ag issues. . .trade wars and tariffs, the RFS RIN waivers and E-15 vapor waiver, livestock production issues, farm labor issues and even a couple non-Ag issues such as gun rights. JDS told me that he doesn't favor banning any guns and will not vote for Nancy Pelosi for House Speaker. I even explained to him why the King amendment to the farm bill on the commerce clause was a good thing for Agriculture. I told him that if he championed it, that it might actually pass. He listened with interest but didn't sign onto that yet.

Steve King is inconsequential relative to governance in any substantive way as he is viewed as fringe in his party. If the democrats win control of the House in the mid-term election, King will be even less consequential than he has been. JD Scholten, however, would be a rising star in his party putting 4th district constituent interests back on the front burner. JDS would be a constituent issue-oriented representative, not an ideologue like King.

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