

Fact Check: The Truth About Dr. Davis's Claims in KSTP/League of Women Voters Debate

10/12/08

Dr. Davis's Claim: "I am proud as a Minnesotan that we are among the nation's leaders in ethanol and wind power and alternative fuels."

Fact: Dr. Davis said he would have voted against efforts to increase biofuels production.

- **Davis: I Would Have Voted Against Energy Bill That Boosted Biofuels.** At a debate at Farmfest, Dr. Davis said "I would not have voted for the 2007 energy bill," which, according to the White House, set "a mandatory Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) requiring fuel producers to use at least 36 billion gallons of biofuel in 2022....The RFS in the bill he signed today represents a nearly five-fold increase over current levels." [Minnesota Public Radio, 8/5/08; White House press release: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/12/20071219-1.html>, accessed 10/9/2008]

Dr. Davis's Claim: Tim Walz voted with his party's leadership 97% of the time.

Fact: Tim Walz has been recognized as an independent voice in Congress who is not afraid to buck his party leadership.

- **Congressman Walz Is More Conservative Than 35.7% of Congress.** According to National Journal's 2007 ratings, Walz is more conservative than 35.7% of Congressmen. [National Journal 2007 Vote Ratings]
- **Walz Voted Twice Against The Wall Street Bailout Because It Didn't Help Southern Minnesotans.** Congressman Walz bucked his own party and voted against Wall Street Bailout legislation twice because it didn't help Minnesotans. [HR 3997, Vote #674, 9/29/08; HR 1424, Vote #681, 10/3/08]
- **NRA Endorsed Congressman Walz.** The NRA endorsed Congressman Walz. "During his first term in the House, Congressman Walz consistently supported the constitutional rights of law-abiding gun owners and sportsmen, and demonstrated a strong commitment to the Second Amendment and our country's rich hunting heritage," said Chris W. Cox, Chairman of NRA-PVF. "Because of his unwavering pro-gun support, Tim Walz earned an 'A' rating and an endorsement from NRA-PVF." [NRA Political Victory Fund Press Release, 9/9/08]
- **Congressman Walz Was Endorsed By The VFW.** In a letter to the Congressman, the VFW expressed their support in an endorsement. "This letter is official notification that the Veterans of Foreign Wars Political Action Committee (VFW-PAC) Board of Directors has endorsed you for re-election to the United States House of Representatives. In addition to comments received from VFW leaders in your state, this endorsement is based on your strong support for veterans, national security/defense, and military personnel issues." [Veterans of Foreign Wars, PAC, letter to Congressman Walz, received 9/15/08]

Dr. Davis's Claim: Tim Walz wants to "strip away the right to a secret ballot" for workers.

Fact: The Employee Free Choice Act does not eliminate the secret ballot as an option for workers who want to organize.

- **WCCO: Employee Free Choice Act Would Not Eliminate Secret Ballot.** In July 2008, a WCCO-TV "Reality Check" found that "Since 1948, employers have had the right to demand a secret ballot when workers want to organize a union. It's an election that's overseen by the National Labor Relations Board. The bill in Congress adds another option to the secret ballot, allowing workers to sign-up publicly to start a union....The bill...does not eliminate the secret ballot election. Workers still have the right to hold one but labor unions say the new option gives employers less control." [WCCO TV, "Reality Check," 7/9/08]
- **Star Tribune: "In Fact, The Bill Wouldn't Eliminate The Secret-Ballot Election As An Option."** In July 2008, the Star Tribune reported, "In fact, the bill wouldn't eliminate the secret-ballot election as an option. It would give workers seeking to organize the chance to choose between such an election, should 30 percent of all workers request it, or to pursue the so-called check-card process, which certifies the union as soon as 51 percent sign up." [Star Tribune, 7/14/08]
- **AFL-CIO: Employee Free Choice Act Doesn't Eliminate Secret Ballot.** "Does the Employee Free Choice Act take away so-called secret ballot elections? No. If one-third of workers want to have an NLRB election at their workplace, they can still ask the federal government to hold an election. The Employee Free Choice Act simply gives them another option—majority sign-up." [AFL-CIO, accessed [10/9/08](#)]

Dr. Davis's Claim: "If we open [the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge], I've heard estimates as little time as three years or less before we would be getting oil out of ANWR."

Fact: It will take ten years for ANWR to produce oil; peak production will take 20 years.

- **U.S. Government Estimate: ANWR Production Will Take Ten Years.** "At the present time, there has been no crude oil production in the ANWR coastal plain region. This analysis assumes that enactment of the legislation in 2008 would result in first production from the ANWR area in 10 years, i.e., 2018....The 10-year timeline for developing ANWR petroleum resources assumes that there is no protracted legal battle in approving the BLM's draft Environmental Impact Statement, the BLM's approval to collect seismic data, or the BLM's approval of a specific lease-development proposal." ["Analysis of Crude Oil Production in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge," Energy Information Administration, [http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/servicrpt/anwr/pdf/sroiaf\(2008\)03.pdf](http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/servicrpt/anwr/pdf/sroiaf(2008)03.pdf), May 2008, accessed 10/12/08]

Dr. Davis's Claim: Privatizing Social Security will allow us to "maintain the promise of Social Security."

Fact: Allowing younger workers to divert a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes into private accounts would dismantle the Social Security retirement benefits that are crucial to senior citizens.

- **AARP: "Partial Privatization" Would Dismantle Social Security.** "Novelli, AARP's chief executive officer, also disagreed with Bush's assertion that Social Security faces a crisis. He said the president's idea for private

accounts carries huge costs and "is not necessary" to make the program's finances sound over the long term. 'We can fix Social Security without dismantling it, which is what private accounts carved out of Social Security do.'" [USA Today, 1/24/2005]

- **29 Organizations Says "Partial Privatization" Would Cost Trillions Of Dollars And Result In Social Security Benefit Cuts.** "Personal accounts financed out of Social Security are not a solvency option. Transferring money away from Social Security into individual accounts worsens solvency and necessitates greater changes than would otherwise be needed to ensure long-term solvency. Financing private accounts will require trillions of dollars in tax increases, cuts to Social Security benefits, new government debt or substantial reductions in other government spending....Any accounting that disguises the costs of such partial privatization is unfair to the American public." [Letter to President Bush from Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, 12/16/2004, <http://www.retiredamericans.org/ht/display/ArticleDetails/i/1448/pid/324>, accessed 10/9/2008]
- **Non-Partisan Brookings Institution: Privatizing Social Security Would Undermine Americans' Retirement Security.** "Not only would privatization expose workers to risks they are poorly equipped to handle, it would subject their children to debts they should not be asked to bear....Saving in private accounts in addition to Social Security should be encouraged. But carving out payroll taxes to deposit in inherently risky private accounts would undermine the assured income that Social Security provides." [Brookings Institution, "Privatize Social Security? No." November 2004, <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/aaron/20041101.htm>, accessed 10/9/2008]

Dr. Davis's Claim: Social Security "in its current trajectory is going to go bankrupt."

Fact: Social Security has enough funds to remain solvent until 2052.

- **U.S. Government Estimates Show That Social Security Will Remain Solvent For Decades.** "The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), which adopts a less pessimistic set of economic assumptions than the trustees' intermediate scenario, projects that the Social Security trust fund has enough money to pay all scheduled benefits...until 2052." [Economic Policy Institute, "Social Security," http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/issueguide_socialsecurityprivfaq#20, accessed 10/12/2008]

Dr. Davis's Claim: Tim Walz voted 12 times against off-shore drilling.

Fact: While Tim has voted against business-as-usual bills that call for blank checks to Big Oil but do nothing to help make America more energy independent, he has repeatedly voted to expand oil and gas drilling. He helped write a bipartisan bill that called for expanded drilling off our coastline and he voted to allow the ban on offshore drilling to expire.

- **Walz and Bipartisan Energy Group Authored Legislation To Allow Drilling 25 Miles Off The Coast.** "The coalition, which Walz said was made up of 14 Republicans and 10 Democrats, has been meeting for about one month without the blessing or participation of House leaders from either party." The *LA Times* reported

'Pelosi has long opposed lifting the drilling ban. but has come under pressure from members of her own party.' Rep. Walz helped write a bill permitting new drilling 25 miles off the coast." [Mankato Free Press, 7/30/08; *LA Times*, 8/14/08]

- **Walz Voted To Allow States To Decide If They Wanted To Drill Off Their Coast.** In 2008, Walz voted for a bill that would give states the option to allow oil and gas offshore drilling between 50 and 100 miles off the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. [HR 6899, Vote #599, 9/16/08]
- **Walz Voted To Lift The Ban On Offshore Drilling.** Walz voted for legislation that lifted the ban on offshore drilling. [HR 2638, Vote #632, 9/24/08; CNN, 9/24/08]