

ENSIGN FACES STUDENT QUESTIONS ON METH, IRAQ AND RECRUITING DOCTORS

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Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., admits his road into politics wasn't along the normal route.

Just before he addressed the Nevada Legislature on Wednesday night, Ensign spent 30 minutes answering questions from five Carson High School students.

The students questioned Ensign on several issues, including methamphetamine, recruiting doctors to Nevada, the war in Iraq and religion in America.

But Joe Leatham's question was of a more personal nature. The Carson High School senior said he was considering a career in politics and asked Ensign to talk him into or out of it.

In response, Ensign told the students about his own unusual road into politics. He talked about not making a decision to enter politics until he was in his 30s and his reasoning for doing it.

"He told me it's what's inside of me and nobody else can make that decision for me," Leatham said. "He had this great quote, 'Evil prevails when good men do nothing.' He said he got involved because he didn't want that to happen."

Ensign also talked about the importance students can have in combating methamphetamine.

"The schools, parents and students need to be involved to help keep people from getting hooked on meth," Ensign said. "One of the best alternatives is in the drug courts. It's better to keep someone out of prison and off drugs. But it's so much better if we can keep people from starting."

Julia Lopez was fortunate to get to question both Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid on Tuesday and Sen. Ensign on Wednesday.

"I felt that Sen. Ensign gave a bit more thorough answers, but they both were very receptive to our questions and talking to us," Lopez said.

Callie Ward, a sophomore, said she was impressed with the way Ensign put the students at ease.

"He was very personable. I didn't feel intimidated by him at all, he was more like a teacher than one of the most powerful people in the country," Ward said.