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Opinion > Editorial

Wednesday, Oct 8, 2008

Editorial

Posted on Wed, Oct. 08, 2008

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Beyond question

Congressmen owe voters appearances at KET debates

U.S. Rep. Geoff Davis' opponent called him out for a battle over ideas.

Unfortunately, LaGrange physician Michael Kelley was left standing alone.

Davis had declined to participate in Monday's debate on KET. The 4th District lawmaker did not want to share the stage with a political neophyte who has raised little money, an aide said.

Yet limited fund-raising does not necessarily equate to a limited mind. Kelley argued with force and reason about the big issues facing the federal government. Voters, and likely Davis himself, could have benefited from the answers to his challengers' and reporters' questions.

Davis, of Hebron, is not the only Kentucky congressman who has skipped out on KET debates this fall.

Reps. Ben Chandler of Versailles and Hal Rogers of Somerset, who also have weak opposition, declined as well. Sen. Mitch McConnell, who is in a close race, decided in favor of a more friendly and limited venue in Western Kentucky.

It's understandable that a politician would prefer the carefully crafted images of their TV ads over answering unexpected questions before a statewide audience.

But having lawmakers stand up and account for themselves once every couple of years is not too much for Kentuckians to ask. And considering the low public approval rating of Congress, lawmakers should be eager for the opportunity.

Skipping KET debates may not have much impact on election results next month, but it contributes to the steady erosion of trust in politicians and government in general.

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