

Kirk, Seals offer viewpoints on e-mail scandal  
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The ever-changing congressional page scandal is drawing sharp words from the 10th Congressional District candidates, with Democrat Dan Seals calling on U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk to press House Speaker Dennis Hastert to step aside until an investigation is completed.

Seals, of Wilmette, suggested Republicans have covered up the wrongdoing to save themselves politically. He pointed to claims by at least one congressional aide that Republican leaders were told about inappropriate e-mails to pages as far back as two years ago.

"They put their own protection ahead of the protection of that boy," Seals said.

Kirk, a Highland Park Republican, said the investigation should finish before any conclusions are drawn.

"My gut is, in general, Denny Hastert is a patriotic, committed public servant," Kirk said. "But we have seen this all before. We've seen a number of people elected by their district ... all go off to jail, not to mention a number of my Republican and Democratic colleagues from Illinois."

Seals says there's already enough evidence for the Plano Republican to step down, at least until the investigation is over.

"I don't know why we have to have a big, convoluted investigation process," Seals said. "It should be enough to get the relevant parties in the room and just have them explain what they knew."

Both candidates met with the Daily Herald for separate editorial board interviews Thursday.

Hastert publicly accepted responsibility for the scandal Thursday but stopped short of stepping down.

Kirk said he's calling for reforms to the House rules in order to prevent a similar scandal in the future.

That plan would set up methods to reprimand members and staff and

force them to tell both Democratic and Republican leaders immediately whenever they learn of any credible evidence of wrongdoing .

As candidates campaign leading to the Nov. 7 election, Kirk says the scandal is going "terribly" for his party. Seals says it has bolstered the interest in his campaign.