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Seals seeks six debates

BY JOHN ROSZKOWSKI | STAFF WRITER
roszkowski@pioneerlocal.com

Democratic congressional candidate Dan Seals has requested a series of six debates with incumbent U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, before the Nov. 7 general election.

Kirk, of Highland Park, did not respond specifically to Seals' call for debates but a spokesman said the congressman has tentatively agreed to two dates for debates.

"Given the congressional calendar, the congressman has already agreed to discuss the issues on Oct. 26 and Oct. 31," said a statement released by Kirk's office.

Seals suggested in a letter to Kirk that six debates would give the voters the opportunity to hear the candidates' views on the issues so the voters could make informed decisions.

"It is absolutely essential for the voters to hear our contrasting visions for America," Seals said. "Only after weighing our positions and how we plan to address some of the critical issues of our day -- such as escalating health care costs, the war in Iraq and escalating energy prices -- can voters make a thoughtful choice in the November election."

Seals said he requested six debates so that voters in different geographic areas of the district would have the opportunity to hear the candidates.

"We've got 12 townships in this district," he said. "I don't think people should have to drive an hour to get to a debate. Twelve debates might be a lot but six seems more than reasonable to me. The idea is to have debates well placed throughout the district and that are accessible to the vast majority of people."