

From: Prosecuting Attorney Scott Ellington [bounce@bounce.myngp.com] on behalf of Prosecuting Attorney Scott Ellington [Vote@scottellington.com]
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 5:30 PM
To: Ken Swindle
Subject: Ellington Shines, Crawford a no-show at Conway debate



**In Case You Missed It
 October 25, 2012**

For more Information Contact:
 Cord Rapert
 O: [870-336-2412](tel:870-336-2412) C: [870-378-4655](tel:870-378-4655)
cord@scottellington.com

**ICYMI: Jonesboro Sun: Ellington shines, Crawford a no-show at Conway
 debate
 By: Chris Wessell, Editor**

If we had to score Tuesday's debate for the First District congressional race, we'd have to first give kudos and a perfect 10 to the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) in Conway and the AARP for sponsoring it.

The folks at AETN, the state's only public television station, did a professional job of hosting the debate, even if "Big Bird" didn't show up.

As for the candidates seeking office, we have to give Prosecuting Attorney Scott Ellington, D-Jonesboro, homemaker Jessica Paxton, L-Marion, and college student Jacob Holloway, G-Jonesboro, high marks for showing up, discussing the issues and being civil.

In those categories, they all get a 10.

As for sitting U.S. Rep. Rick Crawford, R-Jonesboro, we are forced to give him a big fat 0 for skipping the only debate televised across the First Congressional District. Tonight's debate at Arkansas State University will only be seen in Northeast Arkansas.

It's a sad state of affairs when the sitting first-term incumbent running for reelection won't bother to show up to a debate so voters might have a better understanding of where he stands on the issues and how he differentiates himself from the other candidates.

That's what a statesman does.

But never mind, Crawford apparently thinks he's got a lock on the race and doesn't need to bother making sure voters know his record or what he intends to do if reelected.

Whoever is handling Crawford's campaign and convinced him it was OK not to show for the Conway debate should be fired. It's the same old Washington, D.C., politics. Once they get in office, it's hard to beat the incumbent - in this case, Crawford raising \$1.2 million to Ellington's \$324,000 - or nearly four times as much.

That's a lot of unchallenged TV time.

It's no secret that neither Paxton or Holloway has a 12-point buck's chance at the deer feeder in November to get away with a victory, and Ellington lags in the polls.

However, Ellington's performance at Tuesday's debate may shrink that margin between himself and Crawford. Ellington was well-versed on the issues, did a good job of conveying his message and made his other two long-shot opponents look juvenile in comparison.

Ellington was the clear winner even before the mics were turned on - Libertarians and Green Party candidates haven't fared well in the First District - or anywhere else for that matter. We'd give Ellington a solid 8.5.

That's not to discredit Paxton and Holloway. We admire all who step up to run for office and put their names and private lives on the line.

Holloway was the most entertaining by far and displayed the most passion. Even though the small audience was asked not to clap or make any noises, you could hear them having trouble holding their laughter a couple of times during Holloway's answers. When he referred to the Supreme Court as a bunch of old men in black robes coming to kill him, you could tell the audience was having trouble not breaking out into laughter.

Don't even ask Holloway about Citizens United. You'll get more than an earful - and on that issue he's right.

Holloway was well-versed on the issues and had interesting ideas on how to solve country's many problems - although he only got to address a few. He's a bright young man, who's working on a degree in agricultural economics at Arkansas State University. He'd like to see everyone grow their own food, including children, and basically get rid of the farm subsidy program that he says allows the government to pick winners and losers.

As for Paxton, she's a Libertarian who made it clear that her priority is to vote against anything that would increase taxes or make government bigger, and vote for anything that would cut taxes or make government smaller. Enough said.

It would have been nice to hear how Crawford would have answered the panelists' questions and countered Ellington's charges and viewpoints.

A smaller viewership should get that opportunity tonight.

-Chris Wessel

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Scott Ellington, an Arkansas native, is the elected prosecuting attorney for Arkansas's Second Judicial District. He is the Democratic nominee for United States Congress for the 1st Congressional District.

The congressional district encompasses 30 counties from Baxter County in the north central part of the state east to the Mississippi River and south to Chicot County in the south east corner of the state. The district is bordered by Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana.

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Scott Ellington for Congress
(870) 336-2412 • Fax: (870) 336-2415
304B South Main Street
Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401

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P.O. Box 4095
Jonesboro, AR 72403



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