

May 1, 2008

Dear Kurt,

To date, you have refused to engage in a public debate, despite current offers from sponsors and the media representatives prepared to moderate the debates. I believe a few hours of time over the coming weeks will give the people we hope to represent an opportunity to understand our positions, our histories and our records. Public debates are reasonable and certainly are within the best tradition of campaigning in Oregon.

While I have agreed to debate with you anytime and anywhere, and I have released my financial disclosure statement and tax records, your silence continues to be inconsistent with the change our nation needs. If we want to change our country and our future, we need to be open, honest and forthright with the voters.

Since you have not accepted my invitation to debate, I assume it is your campaign strategy is to engage in the politics of old. Just like so many politicians in Washington, you continue to say one thing and do another. Secrecy, Kurt, is not an Oregon value.

There is still time for us to debate. Clackamas Community College and The Portland Tribune have offered to host a debate on May 12 or May 14. Because I believe voters deserve to hear us debate, I have accepted, and I urge you to accept as well.

If you continue to deny voters the opportunity to hear an open and honest discussion of the issues, our histories and our records, at least have the decency to answer these fundamental questions about your record.

Opposing the Minimum Wage

You voted against allowing cities and counties to raise the minimum wage and even voted to lower the minimum wage for certain employees.

Question: Since you think it is a fair and equitable policy for our state to limit people's ability to work toward being paid a living wage for the work they perform, if elected to Congress, will you continue to oppose attempts to pay people a living wage?

Supporting Bush Tax Cuts

You voted to urge Congress to support the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy. In recent campaign statements, you have said you would follow my lead and would now vote to repeal the Bush tax cuts. These tax cuts have been disastrous for our economy and have led to our sky rocketing national debt which will severely constrain our ability to spend on programs that will support the lower and middle class during times of high cost for fuel, housing, and food.

Question: Why did you urge Congress to pass the Bush tax cuts?

Workers' Right to Form a Union

You voted to limit the ability of unions to organize and, through your support of legislation, advocated that businesses be given the right to fire workers who attempt to organize a workplace.

Question: Do you believe the process of forming a union is so imbalanced that it is good public policy for Oregon to allow businesses to fire workers who try to organize?

Supporting Higher Education

It is true that despite the state's urgent need for more education and job training opportunities you proposed in your Ways and Means Co-Chair's Budget to cut the Governor's Recommended Budget for universities and community colleges by \$41 million. Eventually you relented to the pressure from the Governor and education community to fix the budget.

Question: Why did you attempt to cut \$41 million from Oregon's higher education budget, and why did you believe it was necessary to make these cuts in the first place?

Opposing Economic Development for Rural Communities

While the record is clear that you made life very difficult for the budget of the Oregon Economic Development Department throughout the budget process in 2007, you lead the charge to eliminate the Governor's proposed rural economic development program.

Question: Why did you believe this low-cost program was unworthy of support, even when our rural communities are hurting from the loss of timber payments?

Financial Transparency

Question: Why do you continue to refuse to release your financial disclosure statement and your tax records?

The voter's in the 5th Congressional District deserve answers to these questions. They deserve to see us debate.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you have for me, and I join the voters of the 5th Congressional District in awaiting your response.

Sincerely,

/s/

Steve Marks
Democratic Candidate for U.S. Representative
Oregon 5th Congressional District