# Booker talks state of Senate race before solo debate appearance in Estill County



BLAKE VICKERS

U.S. Senate candidate Charles Booker (D) made a solo debate stage appearance in Estill County on Oct. 27. His opponent, Congressman Andy Barr (R) did not appear at the debate in person.

**Blake Vickers**
Richmond Register

Charles Booker, the Democratic nominee running to fill in Mitch McConnell's seat in the U.S. Senate, stood along on an Estill County debate stage on Tuesday night. His opponent, KY 6th District Congressman Andy Barr (R) sent a video message to the debate in lieu of attending in person.

He took questions from members of the Estill County High School Y-Club — the organizers of the event — about his platform and the biggest questions facing the state and country. Just prior, Booker took the time to speak to the Register and several other members of the media about the state of the race.

The Senate candidate has been making several appearances throughout the 6th Congressional District in recent days. That includes stops in Madison County last week. Booker believes that carrying the district could play a key part in a potential victory.

"I've been doing a lot of traveling across Kentucky in our Kentucky Over Politics Tour. But of course, showing up here and standing with our family and these young leaders here tonight is critical to me because Kentuckians across the board — Democrats, Republicans, and Independents — we're all tired," Booker said. "We're frustrated with the chaos, we're tired of the corruption, we're looking for real leadership… Just showing up in this area, is a part of my testament to say that when we win, this Senate seat, we're going together."

Booker followed Congressional candidates Dr. Ralph Alvarado (R) and Zach Dembo (D) in reaching out to Kentuckians of all political leanings in his pitch to voters. He elaborated, saying that the coalition he's worked to build doesn't just include traditional Democratic voters.

"It's not about party. My coalition is folks who voted for Trump, people who have never voted before, people who voted for Bernie Sanders. Because we're all tired. My platform of putting Kentucky first, listening to people from the hood to the holler, is really about saying that regardless of party, we need each other. We're all being screwed."

The Cook Political Report lists the race between Booker and Barr in the "solid R" category, with other top rated pollsters also favoring Barr heavily in the race. Despite that, Booker still sees a path to victory in the race.

"Campaigns that are listening to working people across the country are seeing pathways to win. and that's why we have a real pathway to win this," Booker said.

Barr also has a massive fundraising advantage, with FEC commission filings from Oct. 2026 confirming that his team has spent over $13 million since announcing his campaign in 2025. Booker thinks his previous, unsuccessful, runs for office in 2020 and 2022 have helped him endear himself to potential voters.

"This campaign is years in the making. I often tell folks this is my 'Rocky III.' We've earned a lot of trust just by showing up. What we're showing is they may have the money, but we have the people," Booker said.

The gathering at the Estill County high school also featured debates between 91st District State Representative Candidates David Johnson (D) and Darrell Billings (R), as well as the aforementioned Alvarado and Dembo. High profile debates like it are rarely held outside of cities like Lexington, Louisville, or Frankfort. Something Booker thinks needs to change.

"Man, we have to do this. A lot of folks across Kentucky feel ignored, feel forgotten. That's my story, that's why it meant so much for me to be here tonight. Although my opponent did not show up, we need to do this all over the place," Booker said.

## DEBATE

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Families are working very hard, but too many are really struggling to keep up with groceries, the cost of electricity, housing, gas, and healthcare," Alvarado said.

Alvarado said he would address those issues by pushing for lower taxes, reduce government spending, and supporting coal and natural gas. He blamed the Biden Administration for those cost issues in the country.

In regards to healthcare, Alvarado said he is in support of eliminating fraud in Medicaid and was critical of the Affordable Care Act (or ACA). He said that the current healthcare system needs to be "completely restructured," and blamed Democratic administrations for "breaking" that system. He said his background as a doctor gives him an advantage in "fixing" that system.



NATHAN HUTCHINSON

Republican Dr. Ralph Alvarado makes his case to voters in his second debate against Democrat Zach Dembo.

"We have a vertical monopoly that's been established by insurance companies. They take our money. They don't tell us what we get for it, and they tell us what we have at the end… We have to fix that issue. It's become a shadow government and we have to break up that vertical monopoly… The system is broken, I know how to fix it," Alvarado said.

Dembo also pointed to cost of living being the biggest issue facing the district. He blamed the Trump Administration's tariff policies and the Iran War. Dembo said that congress needs to stop funding the war and putting American troops at risk. He also brought up cuts to the Medicaid program that are on the

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Richmond Register
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Sat. Oct. 31
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611 S Keeneland Dr
Richmond, KY 40475
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Make/Model-
Dodge Durango 2014
Silver
VIN-
1C4RDJAG4EC484287
Owner- Dakota Smith
361 Tyree St.
Brodhead, KY 40404
Lien Holder-
Cargenics LLC
1057 Berea Rd.
Richmond, KY 40475

Public Notice
The Madison County Fiscal Court passed Ordinance 2026-012 on October 27, 2026. View full posting at www.madisoncountyky.gov/public-notices, or in person at 135 W. Irvine St., Richmond, KY by calling 859-624-4700.

Roberto's Auto Repair, LLC
221 North Estill Avenue
Richmond, KY 40475
(859) 624-0038
This is a public notice
that the automobile listed below will be sold
on
November 18, 2026
at 11:00 a.m.
for storage
VIN #
WBANB53576CP02583
2006 BMW 550
Owner:
Rene Duran Martinez
1917 Deauville Drive
Lexington, KY 40504

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