

BLAKE VICKERS

Ky 6th District Congressional candidates Dr. Ralph Alvarado (R) and Zach Dembo (D) partake in their second debate. It was organized by the Estill County High School Y-Club.

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with both sides of the aisle. When both were asked to criticize decision making in their own parties, Alvarado said that he doesn't currently approve of the Iran War and that it has "run it's course," but kept from heavily criticizing President Trump. Dembo was much more ready to criticize his own party than Alvarado, coming out strong against former President Joe Biden's immigration policies and California Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi's history of stock trading.

Dembo used that moment to hammer Alvarado on his alleged partisanship.

"When he says he's against the Iran War, that happened last week when we had our first televised debate he agreed to. Prior to that, his only statement was that he fully applauded and supported the President in this war," Dembo said. "This is someone that only views Democrats as the problem. and they are part of the problem. But so are Republicans. and you all need someone who recognizes that rather than coming up here and and talking about the last president all the time instead of the current when they both deserve blame."

Going into the final stretch of election season, the race between Dembo and Alvarado has shifted from "leans Republican" to "toss up" by the Cook Political Report. The seat was frequently held by Democrats until incumbent Congressman Andy Barr flipped it to Republican in 2012.

With Barr leaving the seat open to run for Senate, many Democrats feel that this is the best shot they've had to flip the seat back to blue in several elections.

Dembo is a former federal prosecutor and U.S. Navy veteran. Alvarado was first elected to the Kentucky State Senate in 2014. He ran alongside former Gov. Matt Bevin (R) for Lieutenant Gov. in the 2019 election that saw Gov. Andy Beshear (D) first elected. In 2022, Alvarado was appointed as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health, officially resigning from the Kentucky Senate in Jan. 2023.



NATHAN HUTCHINSON

David Johnson makes his pitch to voters in the Estill County High School Y-Club Candidate

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County… they have water supply issues, being at capacity for their water there, paving of roads, job creation, and flooding when they have a lot of rain. Estill County has the same sort of issues," Johnson said. "Madison County there are several issues there. There are the homeless population that we have. We do have the overdevelopment of land, flooding, and the price of housing. We have lots of people in our community that rent and their interest rates and things have skyrocketed there."

When it comes to how the legislature could fight inflation, the opponents had differing ideas. Billings believes lowering taxes is the best way to go about that.

"Since the Republican legislature took over in 2016, they reduced our income tax from 6% to 3.5%. That is pretty strong. There are safeguards in place to not take it to zero, but the intent of the legislature is to get it to zero within the next three sessions, that's pretty strong," Billings said. "Conservative fiscal leadership is a big key of taking part in what's going on in Frankfort."

Whereas Johnson believes that repealing several tax incentives could play a key part in lowering prices. He also mentioned reimbursing funding from the state's rainy day fund back to the people. That funding currently stands at roughly $2.6 billion.

"One of the things I think (the legislature) should do is repeal the tax credits for the data centers in Kentucky to create a sales tax holiday in the Commonwealth of Kentucky," Johnson said. "They should also give money back to the people as well… It's there in Frankfort, and is sitting at the politician's disposal."

