

There is not much the two candidates in Indiana's 9th district agree on, including the number of debates.

Shelli Yoder, the democratic challenger to incumbent Todd Young, has issued a challenge for multiple debates in every one of the counties in the district.

Young, however, agreed to just two debates. One of the debates will be hosted by Franklin College in Johnson County, and the other by O'Bannon Publishing in Harrison County at some point before the November 6 general election.

The two sides stated their cases in press releases last week.

Young's Campaign Manager Trevor Foughty said they think the two agreed upon locations provide geographic balance.

"We have been negotiating with our opponent on debate logistics for the past month to ensure that 9th District voters understand the clear choice they face in November," Foughty said. "We think these two events provide geographic balance between the northern and southern ends of the district, and between the current and new 9th district boundaries. We're excited that Franklin College and O'Bannon Publishing have graciously decided to host these events."

The two sides threw verbal jabs about the way the debates were negotiated.

"We wanted to make sure that both sides were committed to reaching an agreement that benefited voters, and so we wanted to negotiate away from the political theatrics," Foughty said. "We're proud that we stuck to that promise, even when they didn't. We had hoped to reach a formal agreement on format--including having the questions at the debates come from the audience--but unfortunately the other side wasn't willing to agree to such specifics at this point. Nonetheless, we look forward to a spirited and respectful debate on the issues."

Yoder's camp contends that in just two years, Young has totally changed his stance on allowing all voters in the 9th district a chance to hear from the candidates in numerous debates.

Yoder's Campaign Manager Katie Carlson said voters in some of the more populated counties like Clark, Floyd, Jackson and Monroe won't have an opportunity to see the two candidates square off.

"The manner in which the Young campaign has negotiated debates can only be described as preposterous," Carlson said. "They are caught up in minute details right down to 'stage arrangements' and the provision of 'a glass of water, a blank pad of paper, and a pen.' Yet Mr. Young can't seem to agree to a debate scenario that would allow the maximum number of voters to watch and participate in the debates.

"He (Young) seems to share Richard Mourdock's view of compromise — that you do things his way. That says a lot about how Mr. Young views his job and his constituents."

According to Carlson, the Yoder campaign originally proposed 13 debates — one in each county. After a lengthy delay, the Young campaign accepted two debates.

Carlson said the Yoder campaign then made a counter offer of seven debates, which she says is the same number Young insisted upon in 2010.

"He may be less eager to debate than he was in 2010," Carlson said, "because he now has to defend a record of voting against 9th District seniors, women and working families, while failing

to help the 9th District in job creation.

“Regardless, every 9th District voter deserves to know how they will be represented on the issues that affect their lives on a day-to-day basis. More than two debates are vital to ensuring voters have that opportunity.”

More details about the two debates will be printed in this paper as they become available.