

First District candidates Davis, McCullough jab over disclosures

By [Wayne Risher](#) ([Contact](#))

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Five of seven candidates for First District congressman appealed to DeSoto-area Realtors Wednesday for support in Tuesday's primaries.



Marshall Coleman



Randy Russell



Travis W. Childers



Greg Davis



Glenn McCullough

GOP candidates Greg Davis, Glenn McCullough Jr. and Randy Russell and Democrats Travis Childers and Marshall Coleman spoke to about 50 people at the Northwest Mississippi Association of Realtors office in Nesbit. Democrats Steve Holland and Brian Neely didn't attend.

Davis and McCullough, who have traded verbal jabs as the campaign heats up, sat next to each other and did not mention their dispute while speaking to the Realtors.

An hour earlier, the McCullough camp held a press conference at Hernando City Hall to call on Davis to release mayoral campaign finance disclosures in the interest of "transparency in government."

Davis countered that he'd gladly supply the documents to the McCullough campaign or anyone else, but said they hadn't asked him directly.

The venue for the press conference drew fire from Hernando Mayor Chip Johnson, a Davis backer, who labeled it "rude" to schedule an event at the city building without consulting city officials.

Davis, the apparent crowd favorite at the Realtor forum, emphasized his ability to solve problems by relying on professionals and a team approach.

His speech was interrupted by applause when he said U.S. troops in Iraq haven't accomplished their mission because of congressional interference.

"We need to take politics off the battlefield," Davis said. "That's where we've messed up over there. We've allowed politicians to try to fight a war from Capitol Hill."

Davis said as mayor of the state's fifth largest city, he has overseen rapid growth while keeping tax dollars focused on the most essential services: police, fire and emergency services.

"We're the only candidate who's been tried and tested by the voters we represent" in multiple elections as mayor and state legislator, Davis said. "We're the only one of the Republican ticket that can say that."

McCullough served a term as Tupelo mayor from 1997 to 1999 and left to accept an appointment to the TVA board, which he chaired from 2001 to 2005.

McCullough also was Mississippi's member of the Appalachian Regional Commission in the 1990s. He portrayed himself as the candidate best equipped to get things done in Washington.

McCullough said he would vote to commit 4 percent of the county's gross domestic product to support the military. He also said, "I signed a pledge not to increase your personal or corporate tax."

McCullough concluded, "This is not a time to send a rookie (to Congress.) You need proven leadership."

Russell, an Oxford ophthalmologist, touted his credentials as a lifelong conservative Republican on social, economic and foreign policy issues.

Russell said he was the only physician on a committee that helped start the ball rolling on tort reform in Mississippi.

"This is a pro-business state because we reformed the civil justice system," Russell said.

He said Toyota wouldn't be coming to the state without that reform.

Childers, a Booneville Realtor, small business operator and Prentiss County chancery clerk since 1992, said, "In our family we are pro-life. We are pro-business. We are pro-guns."

Childers said he favors pulling out of Iraq over 12 to 18 months. "We need out of Iraq, folks," he said. "We don't need out tomorrow, but we need a plan."

Coleman, a Calhoun City alderman and business owner who has served with the National Guard in Iraq, said he'd go to Washington to advocate for the First District's rural heartland.

"People that work ought to be able to eat," Coleman said. "There's folks hungry out there in rural America."

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