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## Spokesman says Lautenberg will debate, but doesn't say when

■ Rob Andrews' campaign manager says Lautenberg is being disrespectful to voters by not debating.

By **DEREK HARPER**  
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**PLEASANTVILLE** — U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg's campaign turned down Wednesday an offer to debate challenger Rob Andrews at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, saying the two dates offered about three weeks ago conflict with the senator's schedule.

"Sen. Lautenberg takes his

**Campaign**  
**2008** ★

responsibilities seriously in the Senate, and that's why he won't skip Senate votes to campaign," Lautenberg spokeswoman Julie Roginsky said.

She accused Rep. Andrews, D-1st, of neglecting congressional votes to campaign for office, saying, "The people of New Jersey want a senator who does his job."

The Senate is in session weekdays through May 23, and Roginsky said Lautenberg, D-N.J., "had commitments throughout



**LAUTENBERG**



**ANDREWS**

the state well before we knew we had a primary."

The campaign is sorting out debate offers, she said. "(Lautenberg) will debate," Roginsky said, "there is no question about that."

The Andrews campaign, which

is seeking debates, is shocked, campaign manager Michael Murphy said.

"It's highly disrespectful to generally all the Democrats in New Jersey but specifically the people in South Jersey," Murphy said. He said the Andrews campaign has accepted 11 debate offers statewide.

He said voters need to hear the candidates discuss the issues. "It's troubling because ... if you were torn between an Oldsmobile and a Dodge, wouldn't you at least expect a person to kick the tires?"

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# Debate

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William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey offered to jointly cosponsor a debate between Andrews and Lautenberg at the college on either May 5 or 6.

Andrews immediately

accepted the offer, made shortly after candidates filed paperwork to run for office April 7.

The newspaper and school have made a similar debate offer to Republican primary candidates for either May 12 or 13. By Wednesday's deadline, Ramapo College of New Jersey professor Murray Sabrin was the only Republican candidate who agreed to debate.

"From our perspective, we

thought it was a good opportunity for both candidates to showcase themselves in South Jersey and do it in a way that wasn't in one person's congressional district or other," Sharon Schulman, director of the Hughes Center said. "So it's disappointing we can't make that happen."

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