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Where in the world is Aaron Schock?

Democratic Congressional candidate Colleen Callahan today called on opponent Aaron Schock to step up to the plate and directly address an issue of grave importance both locally and across the nation -- GOP presidential candidate John McCain's call to end subsidies for U.S. ethanol production.

In press reports last week, Schock was "unavailable for comment" on the issue. Instead of addressing an important issue that could adversely affect thousands of jobs and millions of dollars to the constituents he wants to represent, Schock instead had his campaign manager Steve Shearer offer a non-quote that said, in effect, that Schock -- along with Colleen Callahan and Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama -- generally supports corn-based ethanol and other renewable energy sources.

So does that mean he opposes his party's presumptive presidential nominee on an issue of such importance to Illinois farmers? Who knows? Schock was "unavailable for comment."

Callahan, who has an extensive background in agriculture, immediately recognized problems with McCain's statements.

"The renewable fuels industry is a viable and valuable segment of our economy today," Callahan said. "Thanks to the research conducted in our own backyard by the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research (the Ag Lab), ethanol is today helping reduce the cost of gasoline by as much as \$.30 per gallon due to the 10 percent ethanol blend, providing and creating jobs in an industry that did not previously exist. In fact, the production of ethanol was the "jump start" to an energy policy that previously did not exist."

Schock was also AWOL on another issue last week -- the U.S. Supreme Court's clarification of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that essentially ruled gun bans in cities such as Washington, D.C., Chicago and San Francisco are unconstitutional. So once again, the citizens of Illinois who Schock either already represents in Springfield or seeks to represent in Washington have no idea what his position is. Schock has boasted of his "100 percent" voting record in accordance to the National Rifle Association and favors letting citizens carry concealed weapons in the wake of the tragic shootings at Northern Illinois University in February.

So what is Schock's stand on the nation's highest court's ruling on an issue he has trumpeted in the past? Who knows? He was "unavailable for comment."

"Being 'unavailable for comment' is concerning," Callahan said. "As a seasoned communicator, when my efforts to present all sides of an issue were stymied by not being able to interview or quote each party involved, I instinctively felt as if the person not responding either had nothing to say, was unprepared or had something to hide. It's frustrating as a journalist, and it's unfair to those who have a stake and an interest in the issue."

Where has Aaron Schock been? Bloggers and the largest newspaper in our Congressional district want to know. More importantly, the voters in the 18th district -- and in the 92nd state House district he currently represents -- also want to know.

Some background might be helpful in solving the mystery.

Schock -- in a stunning move for someone only eight years out of high school and not yet elected to Congress -- created a "leadership" political action committee (PAC) back in April. The PAC, a fundraising tool which mainly serves to collect money from donors and dole it out to other candidates of the same party, were once created and used only by top party leaders but have recently become more common among members of Congress. However, it is extremely rare, according to a recent issue of Congressional Quarterly, for a candidate not yet arrived in Congress to establish a leadership PAC.

Add his PAC fundraising duties to his "proven fundraising abilities" and it's clear where Aaron has been. He's so busy raising money that he can't answer his cell phone or respond to critical issues within his district.

So where has Aaron Schock been? Exactly where he will be if elected to Congress -- out raising money for his PAC and his own campaign war chest instead of listening and responding to the people of central Illinois.

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Paid for by Citizens for Callahan