

# Pfaff campaign: It's official: Derrick is chickening out of debates

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**LA CROSSE** — Time and time again, Derrick Van Orden has refused to accept calls for debates, a longtime tradition in western Wisconsin. That's why yesterday, the **Brad Pfaff for Congress campaign** sent a letter directly to the Van Orden campaign urging Derrick to give voters the transparency and honesty they deserve. Today, Wisconsin's third congressional district woke up to learn that Derrick has yet again refused. **State Senator Pfaff** issued the following statement in response to the shameful news:

*"Derrick Van Orden is chickening out, plain and simple. He knows that in the minds of voters, his participation in the Jan. 6 insurrection, his record of sexual and verbal harassment of women, his attempt to bring a loaded handgun on a plane, and his radical stance on reproductive rights disqualifies him. And Derrick knows if he gets on stage, he will have to face the voters on these issues. That's why he refused my initial challenge, that's why he refused when we offered a town-hall format, and that's why he's refusing today. Derrick has chickened out of debates, and he should be ashamed."*

**Read the letter sent to the Van Orden campaign below:**

*September 27, 2022*

*Brett Wakeman, Campaign Manager*

*Van Orden for Congress*

*P.O. Box 565*

*Prairie du Chien, WI 53821*

*Dear Mr. Wakeman*

*I am writing to you to urge the Van Orden campaign to accept State Senator Brad Pfaff's offer for three moderated, town-hall style debates in La Crosse, Eau Claire, and Stevens Point.*

*Debates are a proud tradition in this district, and they offer voters an opportunity to hear from elected officials and candidates for Congress in an unscripted setting on how they plan to represent their constituencies. With just six weeks until the general election, it seems as though the Van Orden campaign intends to rob voters of this cherished tradition, and that is unacceptable.*

*Mr. Van Orden has demanded a town-hall style format, and the Pfaff campaign was quick to accept that request. A moderated town-hall style debate would be in keeping with the norms and traditions of electoral procedure in Wisconsin's third congressional district while also giving voters the opportunity to directly ask questions of candidates for federal office. Given that Mr. Van Orden was more than willing to debate Congressman Ron Kind two years ago, I cannot fathom why Mr. Van Orden would pass up on an opportunity to put his 26 years of military service against State Senator Pfaff's career of public service on a town-hall debate stage.*

*Therefore, I am also writing to reiterate the request from the Pfaff campaign for media presence at these debates. Once again, this would be in keeping with debate traditions, and their inclusion is imperative to the goal of ensuring as many voters can participate in these debates as possible. Without the press, the Van Orden campaign is denying voters the ability to hear directly from the two candidates about the issues that are facing their families. Members of the media were present at Mr. Van Orden's debate with Congressman Kind; why should these debates be any different?*

*We are aware of third parties and debate partners that have reached out to the Van Orden campaign, but still we have heard nothing publicly from Mr. Van Orden or his campaign about agreeing to a debate. The Pfaff campaign continues to be open to honest discussions about debate formats and other logistics, but anything short of televised, moderated debates is an affront to the voters and suggests that Mr. Van Orden is afraid to put his record against that of Brad's.*

*The voters of this district deserve to hear unscripted answers from both State Senator Pfaff and Mr. Van Orden this fall, and it is incumbent on Mr. Van Orden to*

*do the right thing and give voters the transparency and accountability they deserve.*

*Sincerely,*



*Andrew Whitley*

*Campaign Manager*

*Brad Pfaff for Congress*