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GOP HOPEFULS VISIT MADISON

Messer: You won't be ignored

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During a stop in Madison on Monday night, former state representative and current Republican 6th District Congressional candidate Luke Messer made assurances that he would not forget Jefferson and Switzerland counties.

Concerns have been elevated since the new redistricting plan moved the two counties from the 9th District - coupled with other counties along the Ohio River and in the southern part of the state - and into the 6th District.

The new 6th District stretches from the middle of the state and extends down to the Ohio River. The new 18-county district includes bigger cities like Muncie, Winchester and Shelbyville. Messer said he had not heard any such complaints during his travels regarding the new 6th District.

"We're working hard to show people we're going to be everywhere," he said.



LUKE MESSER: 6th District GOP hopeful.

Messer, who grew up in Decatur County, said the counties in the new district have a lot in common, in that they are all mostly agriculture- and manufacturing-driven communities. He's been going to county fairs and meet-and-greets across the district.

"I think that experience teaches me that you can't represent the communities in your district unless you listen to the communities in your district," he said.

Messer served in the Indiana House of Representatives from 2003 to 2006 representing Shelby and Bartholomew counties. He also served as executive director of the Indiana Republican Party from 2001-2005. During that time, he served as a member of the House Education Committee and the Ways and Means Committee, the prestigious committee that crafts the state's budget.

Currently, Messer is the president and CEO of the Hoosiers for Economic Growth Network, a nonprofit advocacy group focused on education reform.

When he left the General Assembly in 2006, Messer had two young children with his wife expecting another child.

"I really thought when I stepped down that I would come back, but it wouldn't be anytime soon. I was going to focus on my family," Messer said.

This is not Messer's first time running for a congressional seat. In 2010, he faced off against long-time 5th District incumbent Dan Burton in the primary election. Messer came within two percentage points of

winning the election.

But after the new redistricting plan, Messer and his Shelbyville home are now included in the 6th District with Jefferson and Switzerland counties. Messer said he had no intention of running for the 6th District seat until current Rep. Mike Pence announced he would be running for governor in 2012.

"I wouldn't have run against Mike Pence in the primary," said Messer, who added that he and Pence are good friends.

Messer considers himself pro-life and pro-Second Amendment (the right to keep and bear arms) and takes great pride in the time he served in the General Assembly. He said he's heard two major concerns while campaigning around the district.

"The two things you hear about over and over from folks are jobs and spending. People are concerned about the economy and concerned about the loss of jobs and want to see what can be done to help reverse that trend. And they're concerned about what we're spending in Washington and what that may mean to our kids, grandkids and great-grandkids," Messer said.

Messer said the U.S. could be headed for rough times in the years ahead, and he wants to take on a leadership role to improve life for the next generation.

"I want to make sure they live the same kind of life I grew up in," he said.