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- Editions -

Rail, Economy on Table

8th District candidates debate in Reston.

By [Mirza Kurspahic](#)

Wednesday, October 01, 2008

When U.S. Rep. Jim Moran (D-8) introduced himself to Reston viewers during a Monday night debate with Republican challenger Mark Ellmore, he also introduced the top ratings the 8th District received in quality of life surveys conducted for the American Human Development Report. Moran said the district was ranked first or second in most standard of living categories.

"This is pretty much the best place to live in the country, if not the world," said Moran. However, the district is not without its problems as the nation's economic picture grows darker, and traffic congestion continues to soar.

"Enough hasn't been done" to curb traffic congestion, said Ellmore. He criticized Moran for not doing enough to have the rail extension to Dulles Airport and into Loudoun County completed after 17 years in Congress. "You have to lead, you have to go get it," said Ellmore of how he would have handled the rail extension differently than Moran.

Ellmore, who is campaigning on eliminating earmarks, said more earmarks should have been secured for the rail project. "It's always an excuse, 'There's no money,' but there's plenty of money to earmark or put in other projects," said Ellmore. He added that Reston must not be Moran's priority or else rail would be running through the community at this point. "We should have found the way to take the reins and go get the money," said Ellmore.

Moran answered that he has secured \$265 million in earmarks for Rail to Dulles, defending the practice as a way to secure fair federal funding for Northern Virginia. He said 12 years of a Republican Congress and seven years of a Republican presidency has made it difficult to secure funds for the project.

"It's like pulling teeth to get some money for Rail to Dulles," said Moran.

WHILE MORAN cast a vote earlier in the day on Monday in support of a failed government bailout of Wall Street giants "because it's an urgent matter," area nonprofits continued to face struggles as demand for their services continue to grow in the midst of decreased charitable giving. Ellmore said he would encourage greater numbers of individuals to contribute to the area nonprofits.

"We need to become sacrificial givers," said Ellmore. "It's easy to talk about, 'Oh, we're going to go ahead and give some money and ask the government to pay for the poor and the downtrodden and the needy,' but it's harder when you have to get into your checkbook and truly sacrifice," said Ellmore. "We can do more, all of us."

Moran said there was a fundamental difference between the two candidates on government's involvement in the nonprofits, which he said are essential to the region. "I got to tell you, and most of them [nonprofit organizations' leaders] would tell you that the government is needed," said Moran. He added that in the 1920s the nation's poor relied on personal giving, which resulted in some people dying. "The fact is, government needs to be there with human services, with health clinics, with good public education, with homeless shelters if necessary," said Moran.

The two candidates further discussed their positions on earmarks, national economy and other issues. The third candidate in the race, Ron Fisher of the Independent Greens, was not at the debate. The debate will be broadcast on Reston Community Television, Channel 28, and will be available online at <http://www.rctv28.com>.

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A horizontal banner for Asbury Methodist Village. On the left, a photograph shows an elderly man and woman looking at a document together. To the right of the photo, the text "ASBURY" is in large, bold, serif letters, with "METHODIST VILLAGE" in smaller letters below it. Further right, it says "Retirement Living Community", followed by the phone number "301-216-4020" and the website "AsburyMethodistVillage.org" with a small house icon.

A vertical banner with a green, leafy background. At the top, the phone number "301-216-4020" is written in large, bold, black letters. Below it is a small house icon and the website "AsburyMethodistVillage.org".