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U.S. Rep. John Faso agrees to community forum at Esopus Town Hall

By Freeman staff

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PORT EWEN, N.Y. >> U.S. Rep. John Faso, who has been [hounded by anti-Trump activists since taking office in January to hold a town hall-type meeting](#) with constituents, has agreed to a forum at Esopus Town Hall with attendance limited to 200 tickets.

The forum was announced by [Move Forward New York](#), a left-leaning, local citizens group whose website identifies the organization as “committed to promoting social justice, preserving civil rights, and ensuring environmental conservation by encouraging participation in the political process on all levels through education, collaboration, and activism.”

The participation of the congressman was confirmed by Faso spokesman John Lange.

The forum, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Aug. 31 at Esopus Town Hall, “will provide an opportunity for Mr. Faso’s constituents to ask him questions in an open and interactive public forum,” according to a release announcing the forum. Questions, written by constituents on index cards at the event, are to be submitted in person at the event before 6:20 p.m.

Glenn Geher, a founding member of Move Forward New York, said it was primarily a group of individuals from his organization who initiated discussion about the forum. He said eight of them met in late May with Faso to share concerns they had.

“During that meeting, we proposed that we host a collaboratively organized open forum that would allow constituents to interact directly with him on a variety of issues,” Geher said in an email Thursday. “We were pleased with his response, in which he asked us for a written proposal. I drafted a proposal that sought to create an open and balanced context for this event.”

Geher added that the ground rules for the event were largely set in his proposal, “which underscores rules of civility as foundational for the meeting.” He said before the event starts, representatives from Move Forward New York and Faso’s office will help the moderators select questions to pose to the congressman from those submitted by attendees.

The event will be moderated by Gerald Benjamin, vice president of Regional Research and Education at SUNY New Paltz, and Debra Clinton, local public school administrator and founder of Move Forward New York. Benjamin is a former Republican chairman of the Ulster County Legislature and frequent commentator on state politics.