

KS Gubernatorial Candidates Debate

HUTCHINSON, Kan. (AP) - Republican Governor Sam Brownback and his Democratic challenger, Paul Davis, have laid out their positions on education, taxes, Medicaid expansion and renewable energy during their first debate.

Both candidates tried to portray themselves as supporters of education during Saturday's debate at the Kansas State Fair. Some of the sharpest exchanges came over tax cuts under Brownback that have led to two credit downgrades and a projected budget shortfall for the state.

Davis is trying to woo moderate Republicans and independent voters who are concerned about the effects of Brownback's tax cuts.

Davis told a standing-room-only crowd that he would expand Medicaid in Kansas if elected governor because rural hospitals are fighting to survive without the expansion. Brownback blamed the health care overhaul for lowering funding to the hospitals.

Libertarian candidate Keen Umbehr was in attendance, but watched the debate, hosted by WIBW, from the sidelines. He was not invited to the stage because his campaign did not meet WIBW's fundraising requirement of \$50,000 to participate.

Umbehr says he was disappointed, telling the Wichita Eagle that the decision denies the Libertarian party to express their view and also denies Kansans the opportunity to hear it.

Associated Press