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Congressman Tim Huelskamp discusses taxes, the military, the lack of information and more during a town hall meeting Thursday afternoon at the Rock Island Depot. L&T photo/Earl Watt

By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

Tim Huelskamp has never been considered a darling of the Republican Party, and he is a target of the Democrats. That may be because he doesn't play the party game.

Instead, Huelskamp pushes for reforms to get the federal government in order, and for those who prefer the status quo, that message is not a welcome one.

But that is the message Huelskamp brought to Liberal Thursday while discussing some of the frustrations of Washington and answering questions from those who attended the Town Hall meeting at the Rock Island Depot.

Huelskamp shared some charts and graphs showing the ever-increasing national debt and how the government simply prints more money when they run out rather than control spending.

But he didn't simply point fingers at Democrats for the lack of fiscal control.

He challenged the GOP leadership in the House as well for not controlling spending and for not reigning in the Obama Administration for its expanded use of executive authority.

His message was simple, "John Boehner won't allow the votes in the House, and Harry Reid won't allow the votes in the Senate," he said in response to a number of questions.

He also pointed out that some have questioned whether or not a campaign contribution doesn't help move a certain bill along while others sit languishing in committee.

"I showed up one morning and was told we would be voting on these bills," he said. "I asked, 'Where did these come from?' We've got thousands of bills, and these few get singled out to come forward. Why is that?"

A member of the audience teared up when asking about the tragedy at Benghazi and the loss of American lives as well as other special operations that ended with the loss of military personnel.

Huelskamp explained that Congress is supposed to authorize military action, but with no will in Congress to protect its authority, the president has been able to do it unilaterally.

"I'm supposed to vote to authorize this stuff," Huelskamp said. "Congress is supposed to authorize military action, but when I asked, as a member of Congress, where across the globe do we have American soldiers in harm's way, and I was told it was none of my business."

Other concerns ranging from entitlement reform and Social Security adjustments to the government's response to a rancher in Nevada were discussed by those in attendance and why Congress is doing more to control the finances and slow the expansion of government, Huelskamp explained the dilemma.

"I am one of 535," he said. "You have to have the votes to make it happen."

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