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The Dangers of Phoning it In

Posted Wednesday, September 29, 2010 8:01 AM | By [David Weigel](#)

I'm generally a fan of the Washington Examiner, despite a silly complaint I had back in May over a gossip item the paper ran about me. I like most of the paper's political columns, especially the ones turned in by Gene Healy and Tim Carney. But man oh man, are the paper's horse race political columns getting snooze-worthy. I'm not even sure that Michael Barone woke up before writing [this one](#) about "the Democratic party shrinking back to its bicoastal base."

Now we see Barack Obama campaigning at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, in Dane County where he won 73 percent of the vote in 2008, chiding students for their apparent apathy. Sen. Russ Feingold, who lives in Middleton, four miles away, was unable to make it -- and it's not the first Obama event in Wisconsin he's skipped.

Actually, Feingold [did make](#) it to the rally, announcing his intentions in a Tuesday afternoon tweet and giving a brief speech from the stage. I noticed the mistake in the free print edition of the paper, but it's still online. Barone's correct that Feingold skipped a previous Obama event, but his arrival at the Wisconsin rally was genuinely interesting, as Democrats are currently in a battle to overcome voter anger over the rotten economy* by driving up enthusiasm with their base, and Feingold, unable to run the sort of "I'm not like the others" campaign he usually runs, has signed up in that battle. Anyway, it might be more interesting than another variation of the "polls show Dem doom" column.

*Basically all horse race columns could be replaced by the phrase "voters want jobs and are angry that they can't get them."

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