

DEBATE

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Dixon ever said that Mr. Justice Rehnquist was not qualified."

Early in the debate, one of Koehler's favorite issues came up when a panelist asked Dixon about his challenger's accusations that he missed numerous meetings of the Senate Agriculture Committee, of which he is a member.

Dixon defended himself by pointing out the non-partisan publication Congressional Quarterly has credited him with having the best Senate attendance record of any Illinois senator in recorded history.

He also accused Koehler, a member of the Illinois House of Representatives, of missing more roll calls during one session of the state legislature than he has missed during six years in Congress.

When questioned about her own attendance record and later about an unrelated issue, Koehler persisted in grilling Dixon on his attendance record and accusing him of making public-speaking engagements a higher priority than congressional business.

"I think it is important to know what Alan Dixon was doing that he

thought was more important," she said, again turning toward the senator. "Alan, perhaps you would like to tell us."

On an issue of more substance, Dixon and Koehler differed on the Reagan administration's recent campaign to dispense erroneous information about Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi in an effort to dislodge the terrorist leader.

Dixon pointed out that he applauded the American military strike against Libya earlier this year, but said he disapproves of the administration's campaign of deception.

"I simply don't think that is the kind of thing the United States of America has to do," the senator said.

Koehler, on the other hand, defended the campaign of misinformation, saying President Reagan was forced into that situation by Gadhafi, whose terrorism, she said, is endangering American lives. "In matters

of national security, sometimes we must do this type of thing," she said. "Who knows how many lives might have been saved?"

On another substantive issue, the Strategic Defense Initiative, the two candidates again disagreed.

Dixon — who voted for \$3.5 billion for the so-called Star Wars missile defense system earlier this year — said he regards the program as a bargaining chip in arms control talks with the Soviet Union.

"That matter can continue to be negotiated by both sides," he said.

But Koehler, in an uncharacteristically passionate tone, announced that she supports deployment of the Star Wars system, and would oppose any effort to negotiate the program away.

"It is so important to our future," she declared. "It is important to our state. It is important to America and to our children."