

ITE RESEARCH REPORT

INVEST *to* ELECT

ILLINOIS

SUBJECT: Mandela Barnes
REPORT CURRENT AS OF: 2/9/2022
AUTHOR: Jane Carroll

- INCUMBENT
- CHALLENGER
- OPEN SEAT

PRIMARY DATE: August 9, 2022
STATE OR DISTRICT: Wisconsin

CANDIDATE(S) BACKGROUND:

Mandela Barnes is Wisconsin's Lieutenant Governor and one of two statewide elected Democrats running in the primary (the other is Sarah Godlewski, State Treasurer). He is the first African American to serve as Lieutenant Governor in Wisconsin and the second African American to ever hold statewide office. He assumed office on January 7, 2019, and his current term ends on January 2, 2023. Barnes is a former Democratic member of the Wisconsin State Assembly, representing District 11 from 2013 to 2017. He did not seek re-election to the Wisconsin State Assembly in 2016.

Born on December 1, 1986 and raised in Milwaukee, Lt. Gov. Barnes is the son of a public-school teacher and a manufacturing assembly line worker, both of whom were union members. He is a graduate of Milwaukee Public Schools and is a graduate of Alabama A&M University. After college, he worked for various political campaigns and in the city of Milwaukee mayor's office, and then as an organizer for Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope, a Milwaukee-based interfaith coalition that advocates for social justice.

In 2012, at the age of 25, Lt. Gov Barnes was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly, where he served two terms. He served as Chair of the Legislature's Black and Latino Caucus. He became a recognized leader on progressive economic policies and gun violence prevention legislation.

Within his current role, Lt Gov. Barnes serves as the Chair of the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change and serves on the Governor's Health Equity Council, Wisconsin Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Wisconsin Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force, Governor's Council on Financial Literacy and Capability, and the statewide 2020 Census Compete Count Committee.

CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN FINANCES:

Barnes raised \$2,300,000 with \$1,000,000 cash on hand as of December 31, 2021

OPPONENT(S) BACKGROUND:

There are 12 declared Democratic candidates. Barnes' likely opponents for the Democratic nomination will be Sarah Godlewski and possibly Alex Lasry and Tom Nelson (see separate reports on each).

Incumbent Republican US Senator Ron Johnson announced in early January that he would run for reelection after vowing he would only serve two terms. He is known for maligning COVID-19 vaccines, has described the January 6th events at the Capitol as “peaceful protests” and is a reliable Trump ally. A Marquette University Law School poll found that only 38% of the Wisconsin electoral said they would vote to reelect Johnson. That poll considers Johnson vulnerable, but a lot could happen between now and next November. Johnson enjoys strong support from the Republican base in Wisconsin. Only about 10% of Wisconsin voters identify as Independent, are skeptical of Johnson and will be harder for him to win over.

OPPONENT CAMPAIGN FINANCES:

As of December 31, 2021

Ron Johnson (R) raised \$3,300,000 with \$2,400,000 cash on hand; Alex Lasry (D) raised \$5,100,000 with \$1,100,000 cash on hand; Sarah Godlewski raised \$2,900,000 with \$1,300,000 cash on hand and Tom Nelson raised \$940,000 with \$488,000 cash on hand

STATE POLITICAL CLIMATE:

Wisconsin is a competitive swing state, but is likely leaning Republican. The state has a Democratic governor, Tony Evers, but Republicans control the legislature. Republicans are engaged in an all-out assault on the state’s election system, building off their efforts to challenge the results of the 2020 presidential race by attempting to give themselves full control over voting in the state. They are trying to overhaul elections by taking aim at the bipartisan Wisconsin Elections Commission. Senator Ron Johnson said that Republican state lawmakers should unilaterally assert control of federal elections, claiming they had the right to do so even if Gov. Evers stood in their way. Wisconsin suffers from some of the deepest political divisions in the country

BIDEN +/- 2020

Biden was +0.7 Trump in the 2020 election

POLITICAL REPORTS AND POLLS (e.g., Cook Political Report, FiveThirtyEight, Sabato’s Crystal Ball)

As of 01/18/2022 Cook Political Report calls race a toss up, Inside Elections says WI leans Republican, Sabato’s Crystal Ball says WI leans Republican

SUPPORT:

- YES
- NO
- TBD

NEWSLINKS:

<https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/wisconsins-2022-us-senate-race-takes-shape/>

<https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/a-wisconsin-2022-election-preview-u-s-senate-3rd-congressional-district/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/19/us/politics/wisconsin-republicans-decertify-election.html?referringSource=articleShare>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/08/senate-wisconsin-democratic-pickup/>