

Mitchell, president of state firefighters' union, formally announces gov bid

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Mahlon Mitchell, president of the state firefighters' union, formally announced Monday he's running for gov, saying it's time to get "all hands working again."

During a stop in Green Bay, Mitchell said that phrase refers to a belief in the fire services that everyone at the scene is doing something to mitigate the situation to "make it a little better for people having the worst days of the lives."

Gov. Scott Walker, in contrast, has had eight years to unite Wisconsin, but has instead divided the state instead of helping create great jobs and a better future for the state, Mitchell said. That has created a middle class that is falling behind while others are living paycheck to paycheck, he said.

He also noted Walker ran for president briefly in 2015.

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"Now, we're his 'plan B,'" Mitchell said of Walker. "We're his fallback plan. He had his chance, he had his time. Now it's time to turn the page. Wisconsin is ready for change."

Mitchell, who announced the endorsement of U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, as he kicked off his campaign with stops in Green Bay, Milwaukee and Madison, joins a crowded Dem field. Those running include State Superintendent Tony Evers, former Dem party Chair Matt Flynn, Milwaukee businessman Andy Gronik, activist Mike McCabe, state Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, state Rep. Dana Wachs and several others.

The state GOP immediately announced a digital ad calling Mitchell a “union boss” with the line “Standing up for big special interests.”

“While Governor Walker is moving Wisconsin forward with bold reforms that put taxpayers first, union boss Mahlon Mitchell went to extreme lengths to protect big government special interests during the recall,” said state GOP spokesman Alec Zimmerman. “After being rejected by voters before, Mitchell is doubling down on the failed policies of yesterday.”

Mitchell, who unsuccessfully ran for lieutenant governor in the 2012 recall election, said this campaign cannot be about “Walker and his litany of sins,” but Wisconsin’s future.

Mitchell said he wants to raise the minimum wage and accept federal dollars to expand Medicaid. He also said the state should focus on attracting companies by improving schools, worker training, infrastructure, health care and the overall quality of life.

“If we do those things and invest in the state of Wisconsin and all those things that make Wisconsin great, we won’t have to give a company like Foxconn \$3 billion to come here,” Mitchell said. “They’ll want to come here because of our way of life.”