

Gallagher: Having top-notch K-12 education system best way keep millennials in Wisconsin

Posted on Monday, Mar 12, 2018

U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher says the best way to keep millennials in Wisconsin is by offering top-notch K-12 education.

The freshman congressman, who was featured with the Millennial Action Project at a WisPolitics.com event in Washington, D.C., this week, said while the state has “all the other natural advantages we need” — including affordable housing and “a beautiful environment” — officials should focus their efforts on education.

“I tend to think that if you get one thing right, then everything else follows,” he said. “And I think if you get early childhood education and K-12 education right, everything else follows.”

Gallagher, noting parents prioritize education as “the most important thing when you think about where to locate your family,” added that having a “world-class” education system would help attract young families to the state as well.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Meanwhile, Millennial Action Project President Steven Olikara, a former Brookfield resident who joined the Green Bay Republican at the event, highlighted the importance of creating a “vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem” in the state.

The state for the third straight year in 2017 ranked last for business startup activity, as measured by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

The two also commented on whether party labels are on their way out, given the

number of voters who in 2016 went from backing U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., to voting for President Trump in the general election.

Data released in August from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study, which surveyed around 50,000 people, showed 12 percent of people that voted for Sanders in the Dem presidential primaries supported Trump later that year.

On Sanders and Trump, the 34-year-old Gallagher floated what he called “the Mario Brothers theory” where “when something becomes so extreme on one side of the political spectrum, it actually becomes its opposite.”

That, he said, is what happened with the two candidates. Their broader message contained similar overall framework, he said, but it also featured the same message: “The system is rigged, you’re getting screwed, this is why we need to change it,” although both had different reasons for why it’s rigged.

Olikara, meanwhile, said the nation is seeing a rejection of the two political parties from millennials.

Citing a “truly intense level of disillusionment with the political system” among millennials, Olikara said the best way to channel that anger is by bringing different coalitions together to “fundamentally reform Congress.”

Gallagher frequently talked about the idea that Congress is broken and that members “can’t get their oars rowing in the same direction.”

The new Congressional Reformers Caucus, which he co-chairs, aims to help fix it by instituting term limits for members of Congress and a five-year ban on lobbying, among other things.

On term limits, Gallagher said implementing these items would help incentivize members of Congress “to focus on the unglamorous work of legislating” as opposed to their next re-election bid.

He also said he’d like to see more options in the current political system, contending there’s a “bipartisan consensus around maintaining the status quo because the status quo on both sides profits off this endless gridlock.”

More options, he said, “would open up more coalition progress” and allow Congress to “make original mistakes” versus similar ones again and again.

Olikara agreed “partisan tribalism” is a key problem in the current political climate, adding partisanship leads to “short-termism to our policy making” rather than long-term fixes to some of the biggest problems the nation is facing.

“If we can reframe our thinking about what is important for future generations, we can create unlikely coalitions, we can move beyond the old stale debates between left and right,” he said. “It’s not splitting the difference between the two sides, it’s moving us to a place that we didn’t think was previously possible.”

See photos from the event:

https://www.wispolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/WisPol_Breakfast.pdf