

Nauta says it's time for a 'fresh face' to represent 1st SD

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Bill Nauta, a 65-year-old retired army officer, doesn't think Andre Jacque's eight years as a representative are excessive compared to the lengthy tenure of some other members.

But it's long enough to make him think he'd be a better fit for the 1st Senate District than the De Pere Assemblyman.

"How about a fresh face?" Nauta told WisPolitics.com from his Washington Island residence when asked why he's running. Nauta faces Jacque in his district's Republican primary Aug. 14.

"Too many people are full-time legislators. One hundred years ago, everybody came from different walks of life. They served in the Legislature, came back home and had a private life," he said.

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Nauta, whose career includes a five-year stint at the Pentagon, is living life a bit slower these days, with a summer job working for the Washington Island ferry as the only thing keeping him from his retirement.

But he says his mind and body are sound and that he's ready to serve his community after serving his country. For Nauta, part of that service means highlighting an issue not many members of the modern Republican Party have embraced: the environment.

"I'm very big on environmental issues," he said. "I truly believe we have a global warming issue."

Addressing the environment at the state level means ensuring good water quality — especially for what he calls “vulnerable” residents of Kewaunee County and other areas of northeastern Wisconsin — through embracing new technologies, such as anaerobic digesters.

He thinks measures to improve Wisconsin’s environment will likely mean both business interests and hardline environmentalists might have to “bite the bullet” on some of their demands.

As a veteran, Nauta said he would also focus on related issues if elected. On the top of his list: combatting the high rates of veteran suicide and safeguarding quality care at VA hospitals such as the one in Tomah. As a statement of his commitment to veterans issues, Nauta told WisPolitics.com he plans to donate half of his \$52,999 annual salary to the roughly 30 veterans organizations in the 1st SD for the duration of his tenure.

On the issue of transportation funding, Nauta said he’d consider a 5 cent increase in the gas tax, but is against tolling. He said he’d also consider increases in registration fees for vehicles, but not a specific increase exclusively for electric vehicles.

Nauta backs Gov. Scott Walker’s proposal to cut taxes due to anticipated increased revenue from remote online sales taxes. He also backs the gov’s stance of continuing the UW tuition freeze, and believes it’s the UW System’s responsibility to finance it.

On corrections issues, he said he prefers alternative sentencing options — including a reduction in some penalties for drug-related crimes such as marijuana possession — instead of building new prisons.

“I’d like to see how many of the people currently incarcerated are really a threat to society,” he said.

He said he does, however, support replacing two of Wisconsin’s oldest prison facilities.

Nauta, who said he’s a member of the National Rifle Association, said he opposes constitutional carry.

“I’m totally in support of the Second Amendment, but we’ve got to look at where

we've come in society and what's happening," he said.

*See a previous WisPolitics.com interview with Jacque regarding his candidacy:
<https://www.wispolitics.com/2018/in-1st-sd-gop-primary-jacque-emphasizes-record-re-nard-touts-outsider-status/>