

Fifth Republican announces bid to take on Kind

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Derrick Van Orden, a former Navy SEAL who grew up in southeastern Wisconsin and then moved back to the state after his military career, has launched his bid for the GOP nomination to take on 3rd CD U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, this fall.

Van Orden, who wrote the book “Book of Man: A Navy SEAL’s Guide to the Lost Art of Manhood,” served in the Navy for 26 years.

Since leaving the service in 2015, he has done consultant work for companies on leadership, opened a cafe in northern Wisconsin and now lives in Pierce County, which is the northern edge of western Wisconsin’s 3rd CD.

This is his first run for public office.

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“He is the poster child of why we need term limits and why there must be some type of moral and ethical standard that supersedes your own personal, political wants and certainly your pocketbook,” Van Orden said of Kind in an interview. Kind has been in Congress since 1997.

He is the fifth Republican to indicate plans to challenge Kind. The others are: Brandon Cook, who wrote on his Facebook page he’s running as a “common sense Conservative Republican;”

Jessi Ebben, a public relations professional in Eau Claire; John Garske, who spent 20 years in the Army and now runs a business helping vets transition to finding jobs in the private sector; and Kevin Ruscher, who bills himself on his Facebook page as “an anti-Trump Republican” who has “never liked the guy.”

Kind won reelection in 2018 with 59.7 percent of the vote, but national Republicans

have targeted him because President Trump won the 3rd CD in 2016 by more than 4 points.

While Van Orden is launching his campaign now, he said his immediate efforts will be to help organized 3rd CD residents to help each other through the coronavirus pandemic.

“We’re going to do what leaders do, and that’s look at a situation for what it is, figure out the best course of action and come out with the greatest likelihood of the best outcome and we’re going to do that,” he said.