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End Citizens United // Let America Vote: Endorses Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes for U.S. Senate

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End Citizens United // Let America Vote today endorsed Wisconsin Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes in his campaign for U.S. Senate. Barnes is challenging Senator Ron Johnson (R) in the 2022 election.

As a member of the Wisconsin legislature, Lt. Governor Barnes sponsored legislation to crack down on corporate political influence and worked to limit the influence of dark money. He is refusing to accept money from corporate PACs in his Senate campaign, recognizing that the best way to build trust between voters and their elected officials is to take meaningful action against the influence of corporate interests. Since becoming Lt. Governor, Barnes has been outspoken about eliminating partisan gerrymandering and supports the Freedom to Vote Act and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

“Throughout his career, Lt. Governor Barnes has stood up against dark money special interests and fought to protect the freedom to vote. From the outset of his Senate campaign, Barnes refused corporate PAC money, proving his loyalty lies with the families of Wisconsin, not corporate and dark money special interests,” **said End Citizens United // Let America Vote President Tiffany Muller.** “While Senator Ron Johnson has spent his time in the Senate making a fortune for his billionaire dark money supporters, Lt. Governor Barnes will focus his time in the Senate on standing up for the hard-working families of Wisconsin. We could not be more proud to endorse him and are excited to see him defeat Senator Johnson next November.”

“I am honored to have the support of End Citizens United // Let America Vote. For

far too long, corporate special interests have used every play in the book – from partisan gerrymandering to voter suppression to billions in dark money contributions – to suppress the voices of working Wisconsinites. Ron Johnson has been a tool of the corporate special interests since he arrived in Washington – he's delivered billions in corporate handouts in exchange for their dark money, and he's left working Wisconsinites behind," **said Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes.** "We're building a movement to change the game in Washington, and that starts by not taking corporate PAC money. Working together with End Citizens United and Let America Vote, we're going to root out corruption and special interest influence so that we can deliver on the critical issues facing working Wisconsin families."

Barnes' opponent, Senator Ron Johnson, has taken nearly $2.5 million from corporate PACs and has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of dark money spending. He has consistently voted against getting dark money out of politics and has rewarded his mega donors with tax giveaways. In 2017, he secured over $215 million in tax cuts for just three donors who spent $20 million to re-elect him in 2016. In that same year, Johnson paid only $2,105 in state income taxes himself, despite being a multi-millionaire and collecting a six-figure salary from the government.

ECU // LAV, a leading anti-corruption and voting rights group that is grassroots-funded, raised and spent $65.5 million in the 2020 election cycle. Its $12.5 million independent expenditure made it the 4th largest issue group spending on the Democratic side. Through its grassroots members, ECU // LAV raised $9.5 million directly for endorsed candidates and state ballot measures. The group also donated nearly $2.5 million directly to its endorsed campaigns.

ECU // LAV merged in 2020. The group is dedicated to combating the two biggest challenges facing our democracy: the corrosive impact of Big Money and attempts to block access to the ballot box. In 2020, ECU // LAV led the fight to protect all Americans' right to vote and played a pivotal role in electing anti-corruption Senate candidates that helped flip the chamber. ECU // LAV has more than four million members nationwide, including 61,824 in Wisconsin.