

# Barnes campaign: Calls out Johnson for ducking question on exceptions for rape and incest

Posted on Wednesday, Oct 5, 2022

>> **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.](#)**

**MADISON** — Today, Wisconsin Public Radio reported that Ron Johnson is refusing to answer questions about his support for an abortion ban with no exceptions for rape, incest, or life of the mother. When pressed on the topic, “Johnson’s Senate spokesperson did not respond to a request...about whether Johnson sees rape and incest exceptions as a subject for a future referendum.” Johnson has previously cosponsored [legislation](#) declaring life begins at conception and essentially making abortion murder in all cases with no exceptions.

***In response, Barnes campaign spokesperson Maddy McDaniel released the following statement:***

“Just because Ron Johnson refuses to answer questions now doesn’t mean voters don’t know where he stands. They can look at his long anti-choice record, including his cosponsorship of a bill that made no exceptions for rape, incest, or life of the mother. While Johnson hides, Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes is campaigning across the state and holding Johnson accountable for his extreme commitment to ripping away women’s rights.”

This week, Barnes has continued his statewide “[Ron Against Roe](#)” tour holding Johnson accountable for his record of working to rip away Wisconsin’s ability to access abortion, and has [launched a new ad](#) targeting Johnson on the issue. While Ron Johnson continues to lie about his extreme anti-choice record and distract voters from his support for a nationwide abortion ban, Wisconsinites know there’s only one candidate in this race who is fighting to protect reproductive rights—and that’s Mandela Barnes.

In Wisconsin, abortion remains one of the most motivating issues for voters across the state, with [61% of Democrats and 42% of Independents](#) listing abortion as a top issue this year. [55% of voters](#) said they would support an abortion rights candidate over a Republican who favors strict limits on abortion.

**Read More From [Wisconsin Public Radio](#):**

It is unlikely that abortion rights supporters would find Johnson's proposed ballot question sufficient to settle the question. Polling has shown that broad majorities among both Democrats and Republicans believe any abortion ban should include exceptions for cases of rape and incest. Wisconsin's ban includes an exception only when the mother's life is threatened. **Johnson's sample ballot does not address the question of whether state law should include any such exceptions.**

**Johnson's Senate spokesperson did not respond to a request from Wisconsin Public Radio about whether Johnson sees rape and incest exceptions as a subject for a future referendum.**

**Johnson's call is also at odds with his position throughout his time as a U.S. senator. In 2011, less than a month after he took office, he cosponsored the Life at Conception Act, which would have extended constitutional protection to embryos. He cosponsored similar bills in every session he's been in Congress, and in May said he supported a national abortion ban after 20 weeks.**

But at the Rotary Club event, he responded to a question of whether he supports a national abortion ban by saying he "(doesn't) think 535 members of Congress should decide."

His change in position comes as polling shows abortion rights is an issue that has energized Democratic voters ahead of the midterm elections. Both Evers, who is seeking reelection against Republican Tim Michels, and Johnson's Democratic opponent Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, are making abortion rights the centerpiece of the last month of their campaigns.