

# Barnes campaign: ICYMI: “U.S. Senate candidate Mandela Barnes shares why the abortion issue is very personal for him”

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Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes, candidate for U.S. Senate, [recently shared for the first time](#) why the fight to protect abortion access is so personal to him and his family.

Today, Sen. Elizabeth Warren will be in Wisconsin to support Mandela and fight to save Roe v. Wade. Last week, former president of NARAL Ilyse Hogue [penned an op-ed](#) calling on Wisconsin to protect abortion access by supporting Mandela, the best candidate to unseat Ron Johnson in November.

Read more below.

## Key Points

- *As he wrapped up the conversation, Barnes, who is running for U.S. Senate in the Democratic primary, revealed that his advocacy for abortion rights was more than political, but very personal.*
- *And it involves his mother, Lajuan Barnes, a retired school teacher.*
- *“I’ve never talked about it,” Barnes said as he lowered his voice. “But my mother had a complicated pregnancy before me. And it was a pregnancy that had to be terminated. And I just can’t even think of how, what life would have*

*been like for her had she been forced to carry that, to go to term in that situation.”*

- *Barnes said he spoke with his mother and she agreed that it was an important issue to discuss.*
- *“This isn’t a decision that she made lightly,” he said. “But it’s also not one that she made with any shame. And the most important part of the decision is that it was hers and she went on to make a decision to later try again. And here I am.”*

### **Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [U.S. Senate candidate Mandela Barnes shares why the abortion issue is very personal for him](#)**

For nearly an hour Wednesday, Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes asked questions and listened to a handful of medical providers, activists and politicians discuss the prospects for abortion rights.

The somber conversation at a Democratic Party office in Milwaukee’s Bay View neighborhood occurred in the wake of a leaked draft opinion that showed the U.S. Supreme Court may be on the verge of overturning the landmark Roe v. Wade opinion.

If that happens, most abortions would be outlawed in Wisconsin under a 19th century law.

As he wrapped up the conversation, Barnes, who is running for U.S. Senate in the Democratic primary, revealed that his advocacy for abortion rights was more than political, but very personal.

And it involves his mother, Lajuan Barnes, a retired school teacher.

“I’ve never talked about it,” Barnes said as he lowered his voice. “But my mother had a complicated pregnancy before me. And it was a pregnancy that had to be terminated. And I just can’t even think of how, what life would have been like for

her had she been forced to carry that, to go to term in that situation.”

Barnes said he only learned of his mother’s first pregnancy within the last eight years.

Lajuan Barnes, left, with her then-infant son Mandela Barnes in an undated family photo.

As the country awaits the court’s verdict in a key case, abortion has become a more pivotal issue in the state’s two top races for U.S. Senate and governor.

On Friday in Madison and Saturday in Milwaukee, Barnes is scheduled to campaign alongside U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Massachusetts, a supporter of abortion rights.

Meanwhile, Republicans gathering this weekend at their state convention are due to vote on a resolution to “Stop the Murder of Unborn Children” and call for state legislators to “take action to make Wisconsin a pro-life State.”

In an interview with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Barnes said his mother terminated her pregnancy because of genetic abnormalities that were detected in the fetus, “which would have severely impacted the survival after birth.”

“Abortion in this day and age where the issue is so so politicized and polarizing and polarized, and it can be a little tough,” he said. “This is a story that is close to me. And the point being is that a lot of, us all of us, are that close to an abortion story.

“And I think it’s more difficult to like just thinking about the challenges in front of us,” he said.

Barnes said that had the Roe v. Wade opinion not been “the law of the land, my mother could have been criminalized. That’s probably the tougher part because this is the choice that was in the interest of her health, both mental and physical, and to think that she could have been criminalized for it is wild.”

Barnes said he spoke with his mother and she agreed that it was an important issue to discuss.

“This isn’t a decision that she made lightly,” he said. “But it’s also not one that she made with any shame. And the most important part of the decision is that was hers

and she went on to make a decision to later try again.

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