

Barnes campaign: Lt. Gov. Barnes maintains Control of the debate stage

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MADISON — Yesterday, people across Wisconsin and the country agreed that Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes, candidate for U.S. Senate, was the clear winner of last night's debate.

From slamming Johnson for cosponsoring an abortion ban without exceptions for rape or incest, to holding Johnson's feet to the fire for threatening Social Security and Medicare while prioritizing his wealthy donors, Barnes kept Sen. Johnson on defense all night. Johnson ducked and dodged, from failing to explain why he backs [ripping away a woman's right to choose](#) to his [downplaying of the violence at the insurrection on January 6th](#).

What They Are Saying:

The Independent: ['This is Ron Johnson's America': GOP senator challenged on his hardline abortion stance in Wisconsin debate](#)

- Republican Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin's Democratic challenger criticised him for his position on abortion during their debate on Friday night.
- The Republican Senator is running for a third term and said during his debate with Democratic Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes that he supported a referendum on abortion after the Supreme Court's Dobbs v Jackson decision overturned Roe v Wade and therefore revived a ban on abortion from 1849 in the state.
- But Mr. Barnes pushed back and said that Wisconsin would not hold such a referendum because of the fact Republicans control the state legislature.

- **“This is him running from his dangerous, out-of-touch and extreme position,” Mr Barnes said. “And when you take a position like that, there’s so much that you don’t always see.”**

Read the full story [here](#).

Politico: [Barnes takes the fight to Johnson in Wisconsin Senate debate](#)

- Wisconsin GOP Sen. Ron Johnson went toe to toe with Democratic challenger Mandela Barnes over abortion, crime and inflation at a Friday debate, with Barnes taking aggressive swipes at him in an attempt to reverse Johnson’s momentum after an onslaught of attack ads.
- Barnes [...] slammed Johnson for previously calling Social Security a “Ponzi scheme,” saying his position is abortion is “extreme” and assailing his aide’s ties to a fake electors scheme as ending “with a whole-day assault on the capitol.”
- **Johnson was also hit by Barnes over past comments where he suggested that Social Security and Medicare should be eliminated as mandatory spending programs, and instead be approved by Congress as discretionary.** In fact, Johnson previously expressed that he’d like to “turn everything into discretionary spending” — a comment Democrats have gone after.

Read the full story [here](#).

Newsone: [In Ron Johnson Debate, Mandela Barnes Destroys GOP’s Fearmongering Narrative On Crime](#)

- Mandela Barnes’ first debate against Ron Johnson exposed glaring hypocrisies from both Wisconsin’s incumbent Republican senator and the Republican Party at large, particularly on the topic of crime.
- **But when the debate turned to issues involving crime — a topic that Republicans have increasingly used for fearmongering purposes — Barnes employed a strategic approach that expertly upended Johnson’s GOP-led talking points about Democrats purportedly being soft on crime. He simply pointed to the Capitol riots and how Republicans readily downplayed and dismissed undeniably illegal and violent activity by pro-Trump vigilantes in the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.**

- During the debate, Johnson tried to label Barnes, and Democrats by proxy, as supporting policies that have contributed to “a huge problem with skyrocketing crime.” Johnson said that as a result, “we’re not keeping criminals in jail.”
- **“Now, Senator Johnson may not have encountered a problem he could not buy his way out of, but that’s not a reality for the majority of the people in this state,” Barnes added.**
- On that same topic, Barnes also said: “Let’s talk about the 140 officers he left behind during an insurrection he supported. This is an act that he supported.”

Read the full story [here](#).

Wisconsin State Journal: [Ron Johnson and Mandela Barnes clash on public safety, abortion in first debate](#)

- Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson challenged Democratic Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes over his public safety stance Friday, while Barnes went after the Oshkosh Republican on abortion and Social Security.
- “Sen. Johnson may not have encountered a problem that he can’t buy his way out of, but that’s not the reality for the majority of people in this state,” he said at the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association debate.
- Barnes went after Johnson for calling to move Social Security and Medicare from mandatory to discretionary spending programs. Such a shift would require congressional budgetary authorization every year — something Democrats say could lead to eliminating those programs. Johnson denies wanting to dismantle them and has said he wants to preserve them.
- Barnes noted that many people didn’t think the landmark abortion case Roe v. Wade would be overturned, adding that same-sex marriage was a civil right he would back if elected to the Senate.

Read the full story [here](#).