

Barnes talks abortion, claims momentum in U.S. Senate race on 'UpFront'

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A day after his first debate appearance, Dem U.S. Senate candidate Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes rallied with Planned Parenthood President Alexis McGill Johnson Saturday at an event in Milwaukee.

"It's about bringing up an important issue that Ron Johnson continues to leave us behind on," Barnes said on WISN's "UpFront," produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

Barnes wouldn't definitely say whether he believes a woman should legally be allowed to have an abortion up until birth.

"It's not a yes or no question," Barnes said. "These are sensitive issues. You can look at the Texas situation where the woman had a complication with her pregnancy and she had to get hooked to a breathing machine because she could not get an abortion."

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Barnes said that decision "should be made between a woman and her doctor."

Dems are hopeful abortion and the overturning of Roe v. Wade will mobilize voters in key states like Wisconsin.

"We need to get to 52 in order to codify Roe," McGill Johnson said. "And we believe that Mandela Barnes is best positioned to help us go all the way through Wisconsin to do that."

Barnes dismissed the notion that national Dem donors are beginning to get leery of his chances and may be shifting national resources to other key U.S. Senate races.

Barnes recently reported raising more than \$20 million in the third quarter.

"I would say support is growing," Barnes said. "Support now has been more than it's ever been. We had our biggest haul. We have the energy. We have the momentum, a groundswell of support. Our volunteer base continues to grow by the day."

Barnes wouldn't reveal what his campaign's internal polling shows, but he acknowledged it will be a tight race through Election Day.

"We're not going to assume that Milwaukee's going to make the difference," Barnes said. "We're going to talk to people like I've never met them before, and we're going to have these same sorts of conversations in Hudson. We're going to have these same conversations in Ashland."

Anna Wolfe, a reporter with Mississippi Today, told "UpFront" the federal investigation into Mississippi's largest ever public corruption case is ramping up and it's "really hard to say" whether Brett Favre could face any federal charges.

Favre, who's been tied up in the case for several years, has hired Eric Herschmann, a former top adviser and attorney to former President Trump.

"I think the national attention has certainly made him take this a little more seriously," said Wolfe, whose reporting has broken major developments in the case. "Before, he paid back some of the money he received personally, so he did receive \$1.1 million in welfare funds under a sort of advertising contract. We now know that was just a way to get more money to the volleyball stadium project."

Text messages made public last month show Favre and former Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant talked about using the public funds to build a new volleyball arena at the University of Southern Mississippi where Favre graduated and his daughter played volleyball.

"He told us by text he didn't have conversations, he said no when we asked if he had conversations with the governor about the volleyball stadium," Wolfe said. "But his main point was, he told me this is economic development, plain and simple. That was his explanation as to why he was communicating with welfare officials."

Republicans continue to outspend Democrats in the race for Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District.

The University of Virginia's Center for Politics has rated the race between GOP candidate Derrick Van Orden and Democrat Brad Pfaff as "leans Republican."

"Western Wisconsin has gotten Trumpier the last six to eight years," said JR Ross, editor of WisPolitics.com. "And the 3rd CD is a prime example of that."

Ross, citing data from AdImpact, said between Aug. 10 and Oct. 3 Republicans spent roughly \$1.4 million on the race compared to \$150,000 for Pfaff.

Projections through Election Day indicate Republicans will spend another \$2.7 million compared to \$1.9 million from Democrats.

"Help is coming for Brad Pfaff, but I don't know if it's going to be enough," Ross said, pointing to other data that tracks how many ads voters see. "Looking at that measure, it's a more than 2-to-1 advantage for Van Orden."

See more from the show:

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