

Bill Kaplan: Vote for Barnes and Evers

Posted on Monday, Nov 7, 2022

The column below reflects the views of the author, and these opinions are neither endorsed nor supported by WisOpinion.com.

Former Wisconsin GOP Representative Tom Petri was a strong proponent of teaching U.S. history. Petri argued: "A basic knowledge of U.S. history is essential to a full and informed participation in civic life." However, Wisconsin Republican Senator Ron Johnson, running for reelection, and GOP gubernatorial candidate Tim Michels didn't pay attention in school. They demonstrate a profound ignorance of the Constitution and U.S. history.

Neither have committed to accepting the results of Tuesday's election. Johnson said: "We'll see what happens. I mean, is something going to happen on Election Day? Do Democrats have something up their sleeves?" And, he continues to cast doubt on the 2020 presidential election. But Michels takes the cake: "Republicans will never lose another election in Wisconsin after I'm elected governor." Michels does not get it that the U.S. is not a banana republic. Moreover, he has indicated he is open to (magically) decertifying the 2020 presidential election and not certifying the 2024 election.

Why are they running? Both millionaire candidates have been crying crocodile tears about inflation, a serious problem. Their remedy to cut taxes for the wealthy was recently tried in Great Britain. It was a spectacular failure. Former short-lived British Conservative Prime Minister Liz Truss proposed slashing taxes on the wealthy and canceling increased corporate taxes to fight inflation. Instead, her program (since rescinded) exacerbated inflation as interest rates for mortgages soared, the pound declined, stocks-bonds dropped precipitously and inequality increased. Truss resigned after shooting herself in the foot.

>> 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.](#)

However, that is precisely the road that Johnson and Michels mistakenly want to take. Johnson wants to make the Trump tax cuts permanent. His singular accomplishment in Congress in twelve years was to add a 20 percent deduction for pass-through businesses like his own in 2017. 60 percent of the billions in tax savings went to rich individuals like Johnson and his wealthy donors. Famed 1980s Federal Reserve chair and inflation fighter Paul Volcker told the Washington Post that he opposed the Trump tax cuts which raised U.S. debt by trillions: their “only purpose I can see is to try to squeeze Medicare and medical expenses and Social Security.” Johnson now obliges by putting Medicare and Social Security on the chopping block.

Michels also wants to make state taxes more unfair. The aim here is to undermine the financing of public schools and use fairy dust to create a statewide taxpayer funded private school voucher system for all, including the wealthy. Wisconsin can't afford two systems. Wisconsin Democratic Governor Tony Evers said: “If that happens, we might as well shut the doors on our public schools for good.”

Luckily, Wisconsin has good alternatives to Johnson and Michels who divide Wisconsin with mudslinging based on fear and race. Democratic Senate candidate Mandela Barnes and Governor Evers are both pragmatists who understand government at its best solves problems. They are lunch-bucket Democrats running on pocketbook issues for regular folks throughout Wisconsin. Both understand U.S. history and want to go forward and not backward.

Vote Barnes and Evers.

- Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C., for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 - 2009.