

Lasry Campaign: ICYMI: Alex Lasry asks The Washington Post: ‘What if Wisconsin actually had two Senators?’

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Milwaukee – Earlier this week, Alex Lasry said that Ron Johnson has done “nothing” for the people of Wisconsin—stating that for the last twelve years, Wisconsin has really only had “only one U.S. Senator.”

Jennifer Rubin writes that “Lasry isn’t shy about stressing Johnson’s missteps,” and that “from a crowded field, Wisconsin Democrats would be wise to select someone able to keep the focus on Johnson’s do-nothing record, rather than his insistence that Democrats are a bunch of socialists.”

[A Ron Johnson challenger asks: What if Wisconsin actually had two senators?](#)

Washington Post // Jennifer Rubin

Wisconsin has a history of electing business executives to the U.S. Senate, such as Herb Kohl (D) and incumbent Ron Johnson (R). Now another non-politician, Alex Lasry, on leave as senior vice president of the Milwaukee Bucks NBA team, wants to replace Johnson. While Johnson has gotten grief for nonstop gaffes and his far-right tilt, Lasry, who is running in the Democratic primary, has a more direct message: Johnson has done “nothing.”

Lasry said in an interview Monday that in the nearly 12 years Johnson has been in the Senate, the state has effectively had “only one U.S. senator.” He adds, “Has he

said a lot of crazy things? Is he a danger to democracy? Yes. 100 percent.” However, “voters are a little tired of fighting [in Washington] and want to see results. If you’re in the legislature, your job is to pass legislation.”

Other than helping enact a tax cut that primarily benefited himself and his donors, Lasry argues, Johnson has been AWOL on everything from jobs to inflation to tariffs that hurt Wisconsin farmers. (Johnson also voted against the bipartisan infrastructure bill passed in 2021 that will bring billions to the state.)

Lasry isn’t shy about stressing Johnson’s missteps. Calling him “South Carolina’s third senator,” Lasry chides Johnson for letting Wisconsin-based Oshkosh Defense go out of state with its lucrative contract to build new U.S. Postal Service vehicles. Wisconsin could have seen about 1,000 new jobs. Instead, Johnson seemed to suggest Wisconsin didn’t need the work and didn’t have a ready labor force: “It’s not like we don’t have enough jobs here in Wisconsin. The biggest problem we have in Wisconsin right now is employers not being able to find enough workers.”

Lasry accuses Johnson of not believing in the state’s workers and their ability to adapt. “We’ve been unfairly labeled the Rust Belt,” he says. “We should be the Green Belt.” He points to the need to invest in the wind industry, car battery manufacturing and environmental cleanup.

Lasry and the other Democratic primary candidates have also slammed Johnson for favoring repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Like President Biden, Lasry favors strengthening the Affordable Care Act and controlling prescription drug costs — but not Medicare-for-all, as initial front-runner Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes does.

Lasry has moved up in the polls to a statistical tie with Barnes, who at least at first presented himself as an uber-progressive, favoring defunding the police and abolishing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. That’s not where Lasry is coming from — to the relief of many Democratic operatives and insiders who fear Barnes has gone too far left.

Rather than forgive all college debt, Lasry wants to hold down the interest rate on college loans to prevent “predatory lending,” and to forgive debt if the borrower works for a number of years in public service. He says that “if you want to go work for Google or JPMorgan, great,” but don’t expect taxpayers to pay off your debt.

On crime, he emphasizes the need to “make sure we are fully funding public

safety,” including paying to train police and to fund other services. Not every 911 call should be answered by the police, he says; well-trained social workers should respond to some situations.

On the economy, Lasry lists the child tax credit and deductibility of union dues as ways to “put money in people’s pockets,” along with his plan to hold down the cost of prescription drugs. He stresses the need to “build more things in America” to avoid supply chain issues and grow the economy, and to build a ready workforce through visa reform and investment in technical schools. On China tariffs, once again, he says Johnson has done nothing as Wisconsin farmers suffer.

Lasry’s opponents say he lacks political experience. But that might not be a turnoff for voters who have become dismissive of professional politicians. Still, “I’m not a political neophyte,” he insists. He highlights his work in the Obama White House for senior adviser Valerie Jarrett; his role in helping to bring the Democratic convention to the state in 2020; and his part in the Bucks’ labor agreement requiring a \$15 minimum wage for arena workers and a commitment to source 80 percent of arena construction material from inside the state. Despite not holding public office, Lasry says he “gets results,” unlike Johnson.

About half of Wisconsin’s Democrats have yet to make up their mind. And as Barnes has lost his lead and Lasry has caught up, state treasurer Sarah Godlewski — also presenting herself as a center-left Democrat — has more than doubled her numbers, rising to 7 percent in the most recent poll.

From a crowded field, Wisconsin Democrats would be wise to select someone able to keep the focus on Johnson’s do-nothing record, rather than his insistence that Democrats are a bunch of socialists.