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**Pressure rises on Johnson regarding 2022 Senate race**

*By WisPolitics.com*

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson faces even more re-election pressure as he strengthens ties to Donald Trump after the impeachment trial, a labor group launches an ad campaign and Alex Lasry announces his U.S. Senate bid.

The labor union group Opportunity Wisconsin launched a $1 million statewide ad campaign. It features two 30-second clips asking forJohnson to stop opposing direct economic relief checks. That came just before Milwaukee Bucks executive Alex Lasry announced he will run as a Democrat for Johnson’s seat, a top Democratic Party target next year.

Meantime, Johnson was denouncing Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., for saying former President Trump was responsible for the U.S. Capitol riots. The Oshkosh Republican still hasn’t announced whether he will run again for office in 2022.

“The thing about Ron Johnson that the political chatter class just does not get is he doesn’t make decisions like your typical politician,” the communication director of Johnson’s 2016 campaign, Brian Reisinger, said. “He’s going to look at a situation and march to his own tune — it’s why the people of Wisconsin have elected him twice, and why the pundits and prognosticators are constantly getting him all wrong.”

Reisinger recently told WisPolitics that Johnson has a lot of things to consider before deciding if he will run again in 2022, but he doesn’t have the same political aspirations as some other politicians and doesn’t feel any pressure to decide.

Johnson in a mid-February interview on a radio talk show said McConnell “speaks for himself.”

“In this case, I don’t believe he speaks for the conference, and I think he needs to be a little careful,” Johnson told The Ross Kaminsky Show. “You know when I speak, I do actually try and take in mind how it might reflect on the party.”

Immediately after the Senate acquitted Trump with the help of Johnson, the Oshkosh Republican exchanged harsh words on the Senate floor with U.S. Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, who was one of seven Republicans who voted to convict. But Johnson told reporters on the floor the words between them were private.

Johnson also said on the talk show that he supports Trump because he believes the former president “really expanded” the Republican Party, adding that McConnell’s thoughts on Trump’s actions did not represent the “vast majority of Republican senators.”

Reisinger said “Johnson only runs for office when he knows he can make a difference.” But he added that the two-term senator would have a solid platform to campaign on after becoming a freshman senator in 2010 and then being “basically left for dead” during his successful bid for re-election in 2016.

He said Johnson could use his leadership role in the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee combined with “grassroots Republican support” and the recognition that comes with incumbent status to build a strong campaign against whoever wins the Democratic primary.

Lasry will face at least Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson in the Democratic primary next August. Others are considering a bid.

Reisinger added that the increasing size of the Democratic field could muddy the waters for voters and mean campaign donations from Democratic constituents are spread thinner across the field.

Johnson said on the talk show he feels no pressure to decide, but he would support whoever is the Republican candidate for his Senate seat if he does decide not to run for a third term.

“I do believe it’s crucial that we retain at least one U.S. Senate as a Republican seat here in Wisconsin,” Johnson said.

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