

Russ Feingold Proposes "Badger Pledge" Challenge to Johnson

Written by
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Badger Pledge would keep super PAC and dark money out of Wisconsin Senate election.

MILWAUKEE - To guarantee Wisconsin's U.S. Senate election remains focused on the issues and needs of Wisconsinites, Russ Feingold today asked U.S. Senator Ron Johnson to sign the Badger Pledge to guarantee a campaign based on substance, not attack ads funded by special interest money.

Russ Feingold made the following statement on the Badger Pledge:



"Senator Ron Johnson and I agree that in this election Wisconsinites deserve a substantive debate on the issues, a desire that could be derailed by limitless anonymous spending and the influence of third party groups. To accomplish this mutual goal I'm asking Senator Johnson to sign the Badger Pledge, the only agreement proven to limit the tens of millions of dollars from outside Super PACs and dark money groups on both sides of the aisle. As I've demonstrated in my career and as we've seen in elections across the country, curtailing the influence of money and third party groups in our elections requires bipartisan agreement."

Modeled after the successful agreement in Massachusetts between Scott Brown and Elizabeth Warren, the Badger Pledge would limit the influence of groups on both the left and right. The Badger Pledge would prevent any third party organization from airing TV, radio, or online ads considered to be an independent expenditure or issue advocacy for the duration of the 2016 Wisconsin U.S. Senate election.

Should a group spend money on behalf of either campaign, the subject campaign would pay 50% of the cost of the advertisement to a charity of the opposing candidate's choice.

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Senator Feingold has a strong record of fighting the influence of anonymous unlimited donations in elections and finding bipartisan solutions to improve national campaign finance.

A copy of the Badger Pledge with Russ Feingold's signature has been delivered to Senator Ron Johnson's campaign.

[The text of the Badger Pledge is here:](#)

The Badger Pledge

Third-party organizations, many funded by national special interests outside Wisconsin, plan to create, air, and publish independent expenditure advertisements attacking or supporting Senator Ron Johnson or Senator Russ Feingold in an attempt to influence Wisconsin's 2016 Senate race.

The organizations planning to create, air, and publish these advertisements may include: 501(c) organizations, so-called super PACs, state and national party committees, labor unions, and corporations using millions of dollars of either disclosed or anonymous money to influence the outcome of the 2016 Senate race in Wisconsin. Most of these organizations are neither managed or funded by citizens of Wisconsin.

Both Senator Johnson and Senator Feingold have publicly stated that they cannot directly control the independent organizations that support them or oppose their opponent.

The candidates also agree that in the past five years, Wisconsin especially has seen a massive amount of outside spending from third-party, national organizations attacking and supporting both Democratic and Republican candidates in Wisconsin.

Both candidates agree that a bipartisan agreement between the candidates is the only way to keep the 2016 Senate race about the voters of Wisconsin, and reduce the importance of these

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organizations on both the left and right The agreement includes an enforcement mechanism modeled from the successful bipartisan agreement used in the 2012 Massachusetts Senate race.

Candidates Ron Johnson and Russ Feingold agree to the following:

- If a third-party organization airs or publishes any independent expenditure advertisement on TV, radio, or online that supports or promotes either specified candidate, the supported candidate's campaign shall pay 50% of the cost of the advertisement buy to a charity of the opposing candidate's choice.
- If a third-party organization airs or publishes any independent expenditure advertisement on TV, radio, or online that attacks or opposes either specified candidate, the opposing candidate's campaign shall pay 50% of the cost of the advertisement buy to a charity of the opposed candidate's choice.
- If a third-party organization airs or publishes any issue advocacy advertisement on TV, radio, or online that does not include "express advocacy," but does otherwise support or promote either specified candidate, the supported candidate's campaign shall pay 50% of the cost of the advertisement buy to a charity of the opposing candidate's choice.
- If a third-party organization airs or publishes any issue advocacy advertisement on TV, radio, or online that does not include "express advocacy," but does otherwise attack or oppose either specified candidate, the opposing candidate's campaign shall pay 50% of the cost of the advertisement buy to a charity of the opposed candidate's choice.
- The candidates agree not to coordinate with any third-party on any issue advocacy advertisements for the duration of the 2016 election cycle. In the event that either candidate coordinates any issue advocacy advertisement with a third-party organization that candidate's campaign shall pay 50% of the cost of the ad buy to a charity of the opposing candidate's choice.