

Ron Johnson to Appear Before Sarasota, Florida Republicans

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Brandon Weathersby

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MADISON - Today, Senator Ron Johnson spoke with "Chairman's Circle Members" of the Republican Party of Sarasota. Joe Gruters, the chairman of the Sarasota Republicans, also serves as Florida co-chair for Donald Trump's presidential campaign. Gruters once called Trump's hateful and bigoted proposal to ban Muslims from entering the United States as a "courageous stand."

Read reporting from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on Sen. Johnson's trip with Florida Trump supporters:

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson has a speaking date Wednesday with Republican Party movers and shakers in Sarasota, Fla.

He'll be meeting with "Chairman's Circle Members" at a Republican Party of Sarasota luncheon. Johnson has sought to step up fundraising in the first quarter of the year as he prepares for the fall campaign against Democratic rival Russ Feingold.

The chairman of the Sarasota Republicans is Joe Gruters, who is also Florida co-chair for Donald Trump's presidential campaign. Gruters called Trump's proposal to ban Muslims from entering the country ["a courageous stand."](#) Trump was twice named the Sarasota Republican Party's Statesman of the Year.

Johnson initially backed Gov. Scott Walker, who has dropped out of the presidential race, and said he will support the eventual GOP nominee.

Gruters said the Sarasota GOP has "some of the best grassroots activists and donors in the country" and "almost every presidential candidate" pays a visit. Former neurosurgeon Ben Carson and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) have spoken to the group, along with commentator Sean Hannity and former Congressman Allen West, Gruters said.

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Gruters added that he thought Johnson was "a great Republican leader and anything we can do to get his message out and put him on in front of people willing to give some money, we're happy to do that for him."

Johnson campaign spokesman Brian Reisinger said, "With Senator Feingold breaking his promise to raise his campaign money in Wisconsin and instead raising 72 percent of his money (in the final three months of 2015) from out of state, we are leaving no stone unturned. And with many Wisconsinites flocking to Florida to escape the cold, it's a good opportunity to meet with folks from our state, as well others who are concerned about the direction of our country and the Senate majority."

Feingold's campaign said during 2015 it raised 38.23% of its funds from Wisconsin. Overall, the Feingold campaign said it received contributions from more than 25,000 Wisconsinites.

Republicans have also noted that Feingold has accepted [campaign donations from Hollywood elite](#) like director Steven Spielberg and Dreamworks CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg, received fundraising help from [U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren \(D-Mass.\)](#), and hosted a [fundraiser in Washington, D.C](#)

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