

OUR VIEWS

It's time for change in Washington

Russ Feingold champions himself as a maverick who votes his conscience. When his party most needs him, however, he's there. In recent months, he voted for two major spending packages—the stimulus bill and health care reform.

When General Motors was rolling out of Janesville, Feingold lacked visibility. He issued statements from Washington or sent staffers on assignments. If having a Janesville native in the U.S. Senate is to our advantage, it wasn't apparent when his hometown needed him most.

Feingold's arrogance has grown during his time in Washington. Six years ago, we endorsed him for a third six-year term over Tim Michels. Feingold thumped him. Now, Feingold is in a fight for survival over a better opponent in Oshkosh businessman Ron Johnson. Johnson earns our endorsement.

Feingold claims to be a fiscal conservative, but we see no change in Washington's spending habits. Rising deficits are a national embarrassment. They threaten our country's stability.

If Feingold is conservative, Johnson will be even more so. He believes in freedom and free-market principles. He says the stimulus was incredibly expensive, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars for each job created, and only added to economic uncertainty.

His main motivation for running, however, was health reform he calls an overreach. He says we'll lose the sort of freedom to select providers that helped him and his wife save their daughter from a heart defect.

He fears that innovation will halt and the reform will lead to a single-payer



U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold, left, makes a point while debating Republican challenger Ron Johnson in Milwaukee on Oct. 22. The Gazette Editorial Board endorses Johnson, an Oshkosh businessman.

Canadian-style system that brings rationing and lower care.

Johnson says Democrats sold us two things: that families would pay less for premiums and that if you like the plan you have now, you can stay on it. Now, he says, analysts suggest families will pay higher premiums and that most people will wind up on the government exchange.

Johnson would fight for repeal and instead push for specific changes that include tort reform, allowing people to buy insurance across state lines, and health savings accounts that he says saved his company, Pacur, money in recent years.

Feingold attacks Johnson's stance on free trade, but Johnson says his plastics company does 20 percent of its business internationally, and he would fight for fair trade.

"I know what that looks like." Johnson notes that a trade war would be terrible for Wisconsin, where 12 percent of the economy, or \$60 billion, is agriculture that relies heavily on exports.

Though he has been a Republican, Johnson says he is not a partisan and

wasn't real active in politics before. This is his first run for public office.

"I'll work with anybody to fix a problem," Johnson told us. "...I will never vote with my re-election in mind.

"This isn't my life's ambition. I love my life in Oshkosh." He says he simply has a genuine desire to serve and isn't naïve. "We have incredibly tough choices."

We would have liked to hear more specifics, particularly in his plans for cutting costs and creating jobs.

We're willing, however, to give this political newcomer the chance to show us in Washington.

Hixson did not propose bill

The Gazette endorsement editorial of challenger Evan Wynn on Page 6A Wednesday in the 43rd Assembly District race made two misstatements regarding a proposed family leave bill. Rep. Kim Hixson voted for it but did not propose it. The legislation also would have offered 16 hours of unpaid, not paid, leave.

OTHER VIEWS

Drawing the line on immigrants, pink underwear

Arizona politics have seeped into the nation's conscience. Like it or not, what's going on in Arizona is getting noticed.

We were introduced to Arizona local politics when Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio went on a crusade to "reform" incarceration. He instituted a tent city and told inmates not to complain about the suffocating heat. He reminded them that temperatures in Iraq were 120 degrees and that brave men and women were fighting for freedom in body armor.

Arpaio fed inmates surplus and spoiled food, took away their Playboy magazines and forced them to listen to his radio station, KJOE, which featured classical music, Frank Sinatra tunes, patriotic selections and educational programming.

Sheriff Arpaio was known as the "Toughest Sheriff Alive" for his unique form of justice, but he gained international and lasting fame when he forced inmates to wear pink underwear. He claimed pink has a calming effect on inmates and that the unusual color prevents theft.

He claims to have presented former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin with a pink pair of skivvies.

Some Arizona initiatives have not survived court challenges. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Tuesday struck down a 6-year-old Arizona law requiring voters to prove citizenship to register to vote. The court said the Arizona law conflicted with federal voter registration law.

Arpaio has no second thoughts about clashing with the Maricopa County Board over his budget. He has been accused of misappropriating millions of dollars budgeted for inmates and the jail. He has used some of the money to fund more deputy patrols.

Pushing Arpaio from the spotlight was Arizona state Sen. Russell Pearce, a Mesa Republican and retired Maricopa sheriff's deputy who rose to the rank of chief deputy, the second in command. Pearce was chief sponsor of the highly publicized Arizona law that requires police officers enforcing laws to question people about their immigration status if there's reason to suspect they may be in the U.S. illegally. That law is undergoing legal challenges.

Pearce is not waiting around for a court decision. He has moved on to the national stage, where he wants to amend the U.S. Constitution. Pearce's target is the 14th Amendment's citizenship clause, which has been interpreted to mean that "All persons born or naturalized in the United States ... are citizens of the United States."

Pearce believes the 14th amendment has been "hijacked" because it grants U.S. citizenship to those born in the U.S. regardless of their parents' immigration status. Pearce and lawmakers from a dozen other states are forming a challenge to what has been described as citizenship for "anchor babies."

Historically, it takes a two-thirds majority in each house of Congress to get an amendment out for a vote. A referendum could also be forced if two-thirds of state legislatures call for a Constitutional Convention. In both cases, three-fourths of the legislatures must approve any proposed amendment.

Measures similar to Pearce's have been introduced in Congress in every session since 2005 without success. Would a new Congress with one or both houses controlled by Republicans change that? Will Arizona become the leader in immigration policy? Will those who disagree with Pearce be forced to wear pink underwear?

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STAN MILAM

ENDORSEMENTS

- Oct. 19: Coroner vs. medical examiner referendum
- ✓ Vote "yes" for medical examiner
- Oct. 20: 11th Senate District
- ✓ Neal Kedzie
- Oct. 21: Attorney general
- ✓ J.B. Van Hollen
- Oct. 22: 2nd Congressional District
- ✓ Tammy Baldwin
- Oct. 23: 1st Congressional District
- ✓ Paul Ryan
- Oct. 24: Rock County sheriff
- ✓ Bob Spoden
- Oct. 25: 15th Senate District
- ✓ Tim Cullen
- Oct. 26: 32nd Assembly District
- ✓ Tyler August
- Oct. 27: 43rd Assembly District
- ✓ Evan Wynn
- Oct. 28: 45th Assembly District
- ✓ Roger Anclam
- Oct. 29: 44th Assembly District
- ✓ Mike Sheridan
- Today: U.S. Senate
- ✓ Ron Johnson
- Sunday, Oct. 31: Governor

YOUR VIEWS

Sheridan has shown support for veterans

As a proud veteran of the Vietnam War and a retired General Motors worker, I have many reasons to thank Mike Sheridan for his work in the Legislature and support him Nov. 2. I had the pleasure of working with Mike for years at the factory and UAW Local 95, where he was a member of the veterans committee.

I have also watched Mike consistently support both veterans and workers in Rock County and Wisconsin. Mike voted to protect military families by supporting two amendments that would have restored the critical military and veterans' affairs funds that the Senate took away. Mike also voted for development zone tax credits for providing full-time jobs to veterans, and a bill requiring Wisconsin employers to grant a paid leave of absence on Veterans Day to employees who are veterans.

Mike took his UAW experience to the Capitol by creating a statewide committee on jobs that developed specific recommendations for

economic development. He also helped extend unemployment benefits for those who need them, and protect health insurance access for displaced workers. I hope that Mike's compassionate support of our families, workers and veterans earns your vote.

DON VOGT
Janesville

Keep county coroner responsible to people

Before the ballots were counted in the last April election, Rock County Board Supervisor Hank Brill brought a motion to the board that would deny citizens the right to vote for a currently elected office.

Instead it would bury the coroner's office in the bowels of the very growing bureaucracy.

Disturbing the judgment of the people, an editorial in the Gazette suggested county supervisors were in a better position to oversee that office (and possibly influence decisions).

This is the last public office that, by state statutes, can be taken away and further re-

move the participation of taxpayers. Please vote for the county coroner to be responsible to the people.

JACK CROOK
Janesville

Loudenbeck offers experience, education

As Americans, we have great freedom that enables us the opportunity and privilege in our country to vote. All of us need to exercise that right. We have a great candidate to represent us in the state's 45th Assembly District.

Amy Loudonbeck knows the community and the voters and understands the issues that concern each and every one of us at the state level. She has the experience and education to make changes that benefit us all individually and the business community while keeping our state government financially responsible.

I encourage you to cast your vote for Amy Loudonbeck on Nov. 2.

CARLA SWAIN
Beloit

Sidney H. Bliss, Publisher

Howard F. Bliss, 1883-1919
Harry H. Bliss, 1919-1937
Sidney H. Bliss, 1937-1969
Robert W. Bliss, 1937-1992

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