

Ripon Profile

Name: Ron Johnson

Occupation: U.S. Senator (WI)

What was your first job, and what lesson did you learn from it that sticks with you today? My first tax-paying job was at Walgreens. I started at 15, as a dishwasher – then soda jerk, fry cook, and finally night manager before I turned 16.

This is your first elective office. Did your decision to run for the Senate come to you gradually, or did you have an “aha” moment that convinced you to launch your campaign? The decision came when people came up to me after my Tea Party speech. I would say the passage of Obamacare from the Senate - the initial passage - is the one that put me over the edge. It's a huge assault on our freedom. Non-politicians had to step up to the plate.

You've been in office now for nearly five months. What has surprised you most about the job? What's most surprising to me is that there are actually people here in D.C. who still don't understand how urgent the debt problem is. Way too many are only now understanding how urgent it is. We have a \$1.65 trillion deficit this year. We have amassed \$14.3 trillion in debt that will crush the hopes and dreams of future generations unless we take action now.

What's been the toughest vote you have cast so far, and how did you explain it to your constituents back home? The toughest vote so far was probably the FAA vote. Part of it modernized the Air Traffic Control system. I support both that and other elements of the bill. I felt I had to vote against it because it rejected the proposal to bring spending back to 2008 levels. We've got to learn how to make government more efficient and effective. We've got to learn how to live within our means.

When you leave office – whether it be at the end of your current term or at the end of another term somewhere down the road – what do you hope your greatest accomplishment will be? I hope I can say I contributed to actually saving this nation from bankruptcy – to bringing us back from the tipping point. I hope to help start us down a path that reverses a culture of entitlement and dependency.

Between you in the Senate, Paul Ryan in the House, Scott Walker in Madison and Reince Priebus at the RNC, Wisconsinites are rattling political cages at every level of government and political office. How do you explain this? Is there something in the water, or is there something else about the politics – and politicians -- of the Badger State? In many respects Wisconsin is a microcosm of America. America is divided along a very deep ideological divide - right down the middle - and that's being played out in Wisconsin. I also believe the folks here are down-to-earth, honest, hard-working people.

Finally, every Wisconsinite has a favorite Vince Lombardi quote. What's yours? “People who work together will win.” We could use that attitude here in Washington. It's certainly the attitude I bring to this town.

