



WisPolitics: Barrett, Walker fight over John Doe, crime and jobs in final debate

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MILWAUKEE -- With an historic recall election only days away, underdog Tom Barrett accused Scott Walker of using "Willie Horton stuff" while the Republican governor fended off Barrett's charges he couldn't be trusted.

"My integrity has always been high," Walker said at the final of two debates before Tuesday's recall election. The statewide televised debate was co-sponsored by WisPolitics.com.

Walker pushed Barrett in Thursday night's debate at Marquette Law School before a live audience to release records to detail the extent that violent crimes were misreported in the city of Milwaukee, while the mayor countered his GOP opponent should turn over emails to shed more light on the John Doe probe that has ensnared his former county exec aides.

Pressed by Barrett on the John Doe emails, Walker countered Milwaukee is withholding crime data from a newspaper and said the release of those records could detail the extent that violent crimes were not reported correctly to the FBI.

Watch video of the debate

[Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#) | [Part 3](#) | [Part 4](#)

But the suggestion brought a sharp rebuke from Barrett over a TV ad Walker has been running that shows a pixelated picture of a child who later died because of abuse.

"You should be ashamed of that commercial, Scott Walker," Barrett chided.

"It shows a picture of dead baby," Barrett said. "This is really horrible stuff. That baby died. The person who killed that baby was arrested by the Milwaukee police and was prosecuted by the Milwaukee district attorney. They did their job but you know what they did wrong? After the baby died, they didn't change the code. It was a bureaucratic mistake, and you're running a commercial attacking my integrity saying that I had something to do with this, and you know that's false."

With his voice rising, Barrett said, "You tell me whether you think I had anything to do with this. I'll tell you right now I had nothing to do with that. You should be ashamed of that commercial." Barrett called the ad "Willie Horton stuff," referring to [an ad run against Democrat Michael Dukakis in the 1988 presidential election](#).

Walker countered Barrett has stressed through the campaign that his leadership on the crime issue was a reason to vote for him and now that a newspaper report shows otherwise, voters deserve to know the extent of the problem.

"Violent crime has not come down," Walker said.

Asked by reporters afterward about the TV ad, Walker said he doesn't blame the rank-and-file police officers and complained that Barrett had ordered furlough days for them. Asked if he was directly holding Barrett responsible for the miscoding of the baby death report, Walker said all he's saying is that he wants to know what's really happening.

Mike Gousha, who moderated the debate, pressed Walker for an answer on a story that broke today suggesting Walker's county exec administration "stonewalled" investigators.

Walker said that characterization was incorrect and that his administration was unable to obtain information about allegations of missing money for a veterans fund and his then-chief of staff went to the Milwaukee County DA's office with their concerns, prompting the probe.

Barrett knocked Walker saying, "I have a police department that arrests felons. He has a practice of hiring them." He

also declared he's been in public life for 28 years, but no one from his staff has ever been charged with a crime and he's never had a criminal defense fund.

Through the course of the spirited hour-long debate the two candidates also debated right-to-work legislation, the state's job numbers, collective bargaining and economic development, among other topics.

RIGHT-TO-WORK

Gousha tried to pin Walker down on whether he would sign right-to-work legislation, but the gov repeated his stance that such legislation would never make it to his desk and said it was a hypothetical question.

"I saw what happened the last year-and-a-half. I don't want to repeat that same discussion," Walker said of the controversy over the collective bargaining changes. "I don't want to repeat that same debate."

Walker said Barrett, in contrast, wants to rehash that fight by calling a special session this year on restoring collective bargaining if he's elected. Walker knocked the mayor for having no plan to make a move to take up jobs bills.

"I'll move on. The mayor doesn't want to," Walker said.

Barrett countered Walker won't pledge to veto right-to-work legislation because he would fall out of favor with the far right.

"He would have a fall from grace with the far right if he said he was going to veto that," Barrett said. "He can't say that because then he'd no longer be the poster boy of the Tea Party."

Barrett promised Walker would sign the bill if it reached his desk as Walker interrupted to say it would not. Barrett said Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, who he called a mentor to Walker, said the same thing only to sign right-to-work legislation earlier this year.

"Mark my words. He'll sign it," Barrett said.

JOB NUMBERS

Barrett and Walker sparred again on job numbers and which numbers are more accurate.

Barrett accused Walker of meeting with political appointees to come up with a new set of numbers after realizing he had a problem with reports that showed the state had lost more jobs than any other in the country. Even with his new numbers, Barrett said, Wisconsin is last in the Midwest on job growth.

Walker accused Barrett of grasping at straws because the numbers, which he said were signed off by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics and Barrett disputed that, show job growth in Wisconsin in 2011.

"I realize this undermines the whole focal point of your ads for the last few months, but the facts are the facts," Walker said. "Wisconsin gained jobs in 2012, we gained jobs in 2011."

Barrett countered by saying even if the gov's new numbers are used, he predicts it will still show that Wisconsin is dead last in the Midwest in job growth.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The two also again debated Walker's comments to a wealthy donor last year that he planned to "divide and conquer" public employee unions.

Walker said his comments were about putting the power back in the hands of taxpayers by ending what he saw as

the abuses by public employees in driving public spending. He also charged Barrett would not have been able to balance his budget without the collective bargaining reforms Republicans pushed through last year.

Walker said Barrett wants to go back to a system where a handful of special interests are in charge.

"That's a fundamental difference," Walker said. "I believe the power should be in the hands of the taxpayers."

Countered Barrett, "I don't view the middle class of this state as a special interest."

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Gousha also tried to pin Barrett down on what his plan would be for economic development if elected. Barrett said he would make sure tax breaks are tied to creating family-supporting jobs, accusing Walker of passing a \$2.3 billion tax break for the wealthy and corporations while telling the middle class "you're on your own."

Walker cut in that Barrett wasn't answering the question and later added it's because the mayor doesn't have a job creation plan for the state and would rather call a special session of the Legislature on collective bargaining, but not one on jobs.

"The mayor does not have a plan, he's just attacking me. You all heard that loud and clear." Walker said.

After the debate, Barrett told reporters that he is standing by the economic plan he created during the 2010 gubernatorial election.

"We refer people to the basics of the 2010 plan," Barrett said. "We think it's a very exhaustive plan. It deals with agriculture, it deals with small business, it deals with manufacturing, it deals with high tech, it deals with biotech, it deals with venture capital. The elements of that plan are still elements I embrace."

CITY OF MILWAUKEE

Barrett rebuked Walker for painting Milwaukee as a dangerous place after Walker said the last thing voters want is the mayor of a city that is impoverished.

"It's true that this city has been hit by the economic downturn," said Barrett. "This city is the place in this state where the most low income, most people of color reside. It's easy to attack this city. But this is a great city. Don't let our governor make you afraid to come to this city."

Walker denied that his comments might hurt tourism by discouraging people to attend Summerfest or Brewers games.

"For years, I've traveled the state on my motorcycle, talking about tourism, talking about Summerfest and State Fair and talking about people coming to Miller Park," said Walker. He said his recently announced "Transform Milwaukee" plan to create jobs in impoverished areas of the city shows a "stark contrast" to Barrett's efforts.

But Barrett responded that the "Transform Milwaukee" plan didn't happen during the eight years Walker was Milwaukee County exec, and wasn't announced until a few weeks before the recall election.

"And so what he did to support (Milwaukee) is that when there was a mortgage foreclosure settlement, unlike Ohio and other states that had Republican governors, he took the discretionary portion and didn't give it to people who were victims of bait-and-switch in the mortgage crisis," said Barrett, who also chided Walker for causing "mass layoffs" by canceling a state contract with Talgo to maintain a train repair facility in central Milwaukee.

"Thirty-five jobs he's talking about, versus the thousands of jobs I'm talking about with 'Transform Milwaukee,'" Walker said.

RECALL REFORM

Barrett said if elected, he would support holding a special session on economic development, but Walker said he'd instead "right off the bat" change recall law to prevent "recall pingpong."

"That requires a special session because it requires a change in the state constitution," said Walker.

Barrett called foul, saying that Walker was active in recall efforts against former Sens. Russ Feingold and Herb Kohl and has never denied signing recall petitions in those cases.

When Walker said he couldn't remember, Barrett said, "You would remember. It's not the kind of thing you forget."

Barrett pointed out that Walker became county exec thanks to a recall effort against his predecessor Tom Ament. But Walker said he thought the Ament recall was legitimate because Ament was involved in a pension scandal.

"I'm not afraid to say that was a proper recall because that was legit," said Walker. "We want to change everything having to do with the recall," said Walker, citing the cost to taxpayers.

For more on the debate, [click here](#).