

## Soft On Crime State Senator Seeks Republican Nomination For Lieutenant Governor

By Mark Belling, WISN-AM

A Republican state senator who is sponsoring legislation to expunge the records of potentially hundreds of thousands of felony convictions in Wisconsin is running for the GOP nomination for lieutenant governor.

Patrick Testin was working the crowd at this past weekend's Republican state convention telling anybody who would listen that he will be on the ballot in next August's primary for lieutenant governor. While the governor and lieutenant governor run as a ticket in the general election, they are chosen individually in their party's primary election. While the job is extremely low profile, its big advantage is that is the number one method in Wisconsin to becoming governor.

GOP gubernatorial frontrunner Rebecca Kleefisch has that status after serving two terms as lieutenant governor during the Scott Walker era. Before her, both Scott McCallum and Martin Schreiber became Wisconsin governor when the sitting governor resigned. The current lieutenant governor, Mandela Barnes, was counting on Tony Evers not seeking reelection. But since Evers says he's running, Barnes is planning to run for the Democratic nomination for Republican Ron Johnson's US Senate seat.

Testin, who lives in a small town near Stevens Point, is one of the Republicans trying to pass legislation that would allow all first-time offenders of virtually all so-called "non-violent" felonies to have their criminal records expunged at any time. If passed, the law would likely result in thousands of Milwaukee felons asking liberal judges to expunge their records. Among the crimes covered are auto theft, an offense that is now a crisis in Milwaukee and many suburbs. The expungement bill passed the GOP controlled state assembly with only three Republicans in opposition. But its fate in the senate is less clear. Despite the support of Testin, a number of GOP senators don't want the bill brought up for a floor vote.

Republican voters who don't want a soft on crime sellout like Testin may have options next year. Also looking at the race are Ben Voelkel, an aide to Republican Senator Ron Johnson, and Cindy Werner, a Milwaukeean who lost last year's Republican primary for the congressional seat held by Democrat Gwen Moore. One would hope both are tougher on crime than Testin.

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