

# Know Before You Go: WI-01 District Primer

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**In the last election, Donald Trump won this district by 10%.** With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018!

## About the Democratic Candidate

**Introduction:** Democrat Randy "Iron Stache" Bryce, born in Milwaukee and raised in southeast Wisconsin, is an Army veteran, a cancer survivor, and an ironworker who's emerged as a powerful advocate for working people in WI-01 and beyond. Bryce joined the Army after high school and was posted to Honduras, where he earned the Army Achievement Medal. Returning home, he worked with homeless veterans until the program's funding was cut, prompting him to help found the Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce. As an ironworker, he organized the resistance to Governor Walker's Act 10, intended to destroy teachers and other public sector unions.

**Issues:** Bryce is running on a broadly progressive platform. He supports a \$15 minimum wage, Medicare for All, tuition-free public college, and a Green New Deal to fight climate change and create jobs. He supports prison reforms including ending mandatory minimum sentencing, ending privatized prisons, requiring community oversight of police departments and federal standards for training. He'd restore the "pre-clearance" formula of the Voting Rights Act, abolish voter ID laws, expand early voting, make Election Day a federal holiday, and restore voting rights to formerly incarcerated. Bryce supports mandatory background checks for all gun sales, a ban on semi-automatic weapons and bump stocks, a mandatory 48-hour waiting period, and ending the NRA's influence on politics. He supports a woman's right to choose, equal pay, paid medical and family leave, and laws to curtail violence against women.

**Strengths:** A charismatic person with an engaging story, Bryce's down-to-earth messaging resonates with voters, and he backs up his positions with action. He emerged victorious and largely unscathed from a difficult primary election, attesting to the lasting enthusiasm he's capable of generating. His fundraising, mostly from small-dollar grassroots donors, has been strong. He's garnered high-profile endorsements from Bernie Sanders, among others.

## About the Republican Candidate

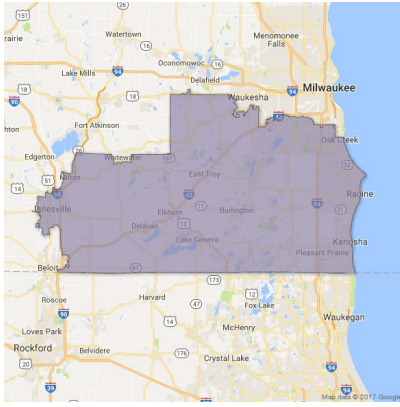
**Introduction:** Republican Bryan Steil, 37, is a native of Janesville and a corporate attorney who represents Wisconsin manufacturing firms. He previously worked as a staffer for House Speaker Paul Ryan. Steil is from a prominent political family; his grandfather, George Steil, was appointed by former Gov. Tommy Thompson as the first chair of the Wisconsin Lottery Board. Steil serves on the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.

**Issues:** Steil opposes tuition-free education at public colleges and universities that would create a better prepared and more skilled workforce, and instead wants to limit tuition hikes. Although he believes veterans should have support during and after their service, he would repeal the Affordable Care that provides preventative care and helps contain costs. While he's promised not to dismantle Social Security or Medicare for current recipients, he'd move the cost burden to individuals, making workers responsible for their health care and living costs after age 65. He wants to reform the federal budgeting process to make it biennial, like Wisconsin's. He favors more restrictive immigration laws and would build Trump's expensive border wall.

**Strengths:** Steil's youth and energy may remind voters of Paul Ryan's initial bid for Congress two decades ago. He styles himself a "problem-solver" for Wisconsin's manufacturing base. His conservative economic positions echo Ryan's. He will have Ryan's support and the funding that comes with it.

**Potential Weaknesses:** Steil struggles to differentiate himself from Speaker Ryan, who's become increasingly unpopular, while still enjoying the benefits of riding on his coattails. As a corporate lawyer, Steil has worked to put company interests ahead of worker interests, the climate, and other stakeholders, and this history may come back to haunt him as he may seem out of touch with all but his corporate employers.

Learn more at [swingleft.org/resources/WI-01](https://swingleft.org/resources/WI-01)



## WI-01: Better Know the District

### Introduction

WI-01 was a swing district in 2008 and Barack Obama carried it. After the 2010 Census, the new district was drawn to be more conservative. However, with Trump in office and Ryan's failure to push through controversial legislation to take away many Americans' healthcare, he is facing the first tough reelection fight of his career.

Ryan's hometown of Janesville is in the western portion of the district, which also includes the cities of Beloit, Burlington, Delavan, Elkhorn, Franklin, Kenosha, Lake Geneva, Milton, Muskego, New Berlin, Oak Creek, and Racine. WI-01's population is 81.8% white, 9.1% Hispanic and 5.3% black. The district's unemployment rate is 6.1% and the median income is \$58,900. Around 10 percent of its residents have no high school diploma, 55 percent graduated from high school, and 35 percent have attained a college degree.

## WI-01: Facts & Stats

### Population Centers

- Kenosha: 99,535
- Racine: 78,548
- Janesville: 63,589
- New Berlin: 39,671

### 2016 Presidential Results

- Trump (R) 52%,
- Clinton (D) 42%

### 2016 House Results

- Ryan (R) 65%
- Solen (D) 30%

### 2014 House Results

- Ryan (R): 63%
- Zerben (D): 36%

### Health Care

The U.S. Census Bureau calculates that Wisconsin's uninsured rate fell by a third under the Affordable Care Act, from 518,000 residents uninsured in 2013 to 323,000 in 2015. Despite this progress, Ryan has made repealing the Affordable Care Act a priority. Had the health care bill he pushed through the House become law, 49,600 people in his district would have lost their coverage, according to a Center for American Progress analysis.

### Opioid Epidemic

Deaths from opioid use in Wisconsin have quadrupled, from 2.1 deaths per 100,000 residents in 2000 to 11.2 in 2015, mirroring trends nationwide. Ryan has supported state and federal laws to address this issue, but has been unable to get the Trump administration to follow through on its promises of declaring the opioid crisis a national emergency.

### Employment and Income

Nearly one out of every five jobs in the district are in manufacturing, with another 14 percent in healthcare, 11 percent in retail, and nearly 8 percent in education. The district's auto industry has declined in recent years, with plants shutting down in Delco and Janesville.

### Recent Elections

In 2016, Ryan won re-election 65% to 30%. Ryan has won 8 of his 10 elections with 62% or more of the vote. In 2008, Obama won WI-01 51% to 48%, but the district went Republican in 2012 (52% Romney) and 2016 (53% Trump). In Kenosha County, Trump only won by 0.3%. Clinton won Milwaukee and Rock Counties, which are partially in WI-01.