

Johnson makes stop in Beloit

By Sophie Harris sharris@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Wednesday, August 12, 2015 4:00 pm

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson stopped in at Northwoods Premium Confections in downtown Beloit Tuesday as part of a multi-city Wisconsin tour.

Johnson, who is running for re-election in 2016, stopped at the shop around 4:30 p.m. to buy chocolate goodies and interact with the public. When asked his opinion about the challenges facing the Social Security system, which just turned 80 years old, Johnson said he wants to be honest about the problem.

“We need to save the system and preserve it. One of the things we are slowly trying to do in my committee is highlight literally how insolvent Social Security is,” Johnson said. “Elected officials rely on the trust fund, and they’re just not being honest with the American public.”

He said he thinks it’s important to be honest with the American public about America’s federal deficit, which he said would be around \$103 trillion.

“We’re not coming to grips with it,” Johnson said. “The first step is that we need to describe the problem and get people to admit it.”

“What can we do to preserve Social Security for future generations, which I think everyone has as a goal?” Johnson said. “We’re not going to accomplish it until we are honest.”

Johnson addressed the topic of 2016 Presidential candidates, but he said he hasn’t backed anyone officially yet.

“Obviously I’m a big Scott Walker fan,” Johnson said of Wisconsin’s governor who is one of 17 Republican candidates in the running. “How do we get our economy growing in a robust fashion again so that businesses are actually competing for labor? That’s how you actually get wage growth and increase benefits.”

Johnson said he comes from a manufacturing background, and he said he doesn’t think government regulations should drive up the cost of power.



Weighing his options

(From left:) Scott Lamoreux, co-owner of Northwoods Premium Confections, helps Senator Ron Johnson decide what to buy from his store in downtown Beloit. The visit was part of Johnson's multi-city tour to prepare for the 2016 election.

“We are all environmentalists, and we all want a clean environment, but you have to have a healthy economy to be able to afford the type of pollution controls that we do have,” Johnson said.

He briefly gave his opinion about Obamacare to the citizens at Northwoods, and they learned that he was not a fan.

“I’d repeal it in a heartbeat, but it’s been implemented, so it’s not that simple anymore,” Johnson said. He said he was interested in a more effective healthcare system that was patient-centered and not controlled by government.

“It’s not a very efficient, accountable, or effective system,” Johnson said. “We have to reintegrate and bring in free market principles and disciplines in the healthcare system.”

When asked about the U.S. Transportation and Highway bill, he said he thinks improving the infrastructure in the country is a top priority of government on all levels.

“What I did support was a long-term highway funding bill,” Johnson said. “All these short expense extensions have been passed on a federal level for what the federal government does, and it’s driven up the cost. Doing it on a short-term basis, we are driving up the cost by 30 percent.”

Johnson said he would have tried to pay for the full six years of highway funding, and he thinks some of the power should be put back in states’ hands.

Johnson said he knows what drives an economy forward, and he knows what hinders business people.

“Professional politicians have no experience in the private sector, but they think they’re so smart and elite that they can tell people this is what healthcare you have to buy and this is what school you should go to,” Johnson said.

He said he believes in individual liberties, and he thinks a “government close to the governed” is a far better system than a centralized federal government.

Senator Johnson, a Republican, will seek re-election in November 2016. He faces former Democrat U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold as his primary opponent.

After his visit in downtown Beloit, Tuesday, Johnson attended an event at the Beloit Club.