

Brian Benford announces bid to succeed Fred Risser in Wisconsin Senate

By [David Dahmer](#) - May 18, 2020

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Brian Benford (Photo by Hedi Lamarr Photography)

Brian Benford has announced his campaign to be the next senator for the 26th district in the Wisconsin State Legislature, an open State Senate district being vacated by the retiring Sen. Fred Risser.

"We need leaders, not in love with money, but in love with justice ... not in love with publicity but in love with humanity, as Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King once said. In the three decades that I have served in community-based organizations, I have witnessed the tremendous pain and suffering that many of our neighbors face daily despite Madison and Dane County receiving glowing accolades from trendy magazines," Benford tells Madison365. "During this pandemic and its horrendous aftermath, we need new political leaders that will carry Dr. King's words within their hearts and actions.

"That is why I am running to be your next senator for the Wisconsin State Legislature 26th district. With all my heart and soul, I will dedicate my service to providing a voice for all, especially those that are underserved and marginalized," Benford continues. "With your help, together, we can work to create a more just and equitable Wisconsin for all of its citizens."

The 60-year-old father of five has spent the last three decades supporting Madison's most vulnerable and marginalized population working for community-based organizations in a variety of roles. The former alderperson for Madison's District 12 on the near east side is currently the success coach for the UW-Madison Odyssey Program, a program that has helped put him on a path to get two higher degrees – his bachelor's degree in 2018 and just recently his master's degree from the UW-Madison Master of Social Work Program.

"I believe that for a healthy democracy, we need diverse perspectives and candidates that reflect this diversity," Benford, a longtime Madison eastside resident, said in a Facebook post on Sunday.

"My campaign will be unique. As I observe all the need in our communities, I find it repulsive to run a traditional political campaign dependent on special interests and money," he added. "For every dollar raised in political campaigns, we could use that money to keep people in housing, provide food and basic necessities, and to address other obstacles needed for people and families to thrive."

Nada Elmikashfi, Aisha Moe, William Henry Davis III and Kelda Roys have also declared their candidacies for the seat.