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Bob Welch Declares United States Senate Candidacy To File Papers With FEC Monday

[Redgranite, Wis...] Central Wisconsin State Senator Bob Welch will file papers with the Federal Elections Commission on Monday, thus beginning his underdog campaign against 12-year incumbent United States Senator Russ Feingold.

“While a formal campaign kickoff event will be held later this year, I am filing the necessary forms to begin raising and expending funds in a race for the United States Senate,” said Welch, in a statement released by his campaign Sunday. “We’ve moved beyond any exploratory stage; I’m in it to win.”

Welch has been touring the state listening to local party and community leaders regarding a possible US Senate bid. Among those supporting a Welch candidacy are: State Assembly Speaker John Gard (R-Peshigo), Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, Rhinelander Mayor Kevin Jenkins and several of Welch’s State Senate Colleagues including Alberta Darling (R-River Hills), Dave Zien (R-Weaton), Ted Kanavas (R-Brookfield), Cathy Stepp (R-Racine), Mike Huebsch (R-West Salem).

“I’m extremely encouraged by the level of early support I’ve already received,” said Welch, 45, a Ripon College grad. “Taking on an entrenched, liberal incumbent may be a formidable task, but we’re putting together a great and growing team that will lead us, and Wisconsin, to victory in 2004.”

Welch and his wife, Jeanne, live in Redgranite in Waushara County just a few miles from where he grew up. They have three children: Adam, age 20; Sarah, 18; and Peter, 16.

“I’ve found that Republicans, Independents, and even many Democrats across Wisconsin are very troubled by the fact that this Wisconsin U.S. Senate seat has become the national focal and organizing point for the extremist liberal opposition to President Bush and the war on terror,” Welch said. “That must change, and over the next 16 months we’ll continue to expose Russ Feingold’s record and take our positive message for securing a vibrant America to every city, village and town across the state for what could shape up to be a race of national significance.”

Welch said that from the moment he began looking at the race and began receiving encouragement to run, it was clear that it was the right thing to do at this time in our nation’s history.

“I am running because Wisconsinites need an advocate for Wisconsin in the U.S. Senate, someone who will really stand up and fight for the security of our nation, make lower taxes and better jobs a real priority, and provide real leadership in addressing our growing health care crisis,” said Welch. “Grabbing national headlines and fighting with the President at every important turn does nothing to make the world safer for our our children, does nothing to create a single job or lower a single tax bill, and does absolutely nothing to advance any real reform that would actually impact the everyday lives of the people of Wisconsin ... Wisconsin deserves better and Wisconsinites need this Senate seat back.”