

# [***Republican Eric Hovde seeks to unseat Democrat Baldwin in Wisconsin race for US Senate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCH-TKP1-JC5B-G3G2-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

MADISON, Wis. — Republican businessman and real estate mogul [*Eric Hovde*](https://apnews.com/article/wisconsin-senate-baldwin-hovde-d812b395425d35dbea9823ab112479df) launched his bid for the U.S. Senate against Wisconsin Democratic incumbent [*Sen. Tammy Baldwin*](https://apnews.com/article/wisconsin-senate-tammy-baldwin-2024-campaign-bc77d35913c8cbb95c7bb89a59072c94) on Tuesday, calling for bipartisan solutions to bolster the middle class and to tackle immigration and national security.

“We have to stop putting on the red jersey or putting on the blue jersey and competing against each other," Hovde said on the 13th floor of a building overlooking the state Capitol in downtown Madison developed by his real estate company. "We need to put on the red, white and blue jersey as Americans and come together.”

Reelecting Baldwin to a third term is critical for Democratic hopes to maintain majority control of the Senate. Democrats are [*defending 23 seats*](https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterm-elections-pennsylvania-arizona-nevada-new-york-6a8b17c560e545e4124e61fa14b3f4ad) in the Senate in November, including two held by independents who caucus with Democrats. That’s compared with just 11 seats that Republicans hope to keep in their column.

This is Hovde's second Senate campaign; he ran in 2012 but lost in the GOP primary to former Gov. Tommy Thompson. Baldwin went on to win election that year and is now seeking a third term in battleground Wisconsin.

Hovde said he was running for Senate to lower the national debt and invigorate the middle class. He also called for bipartisan solutions to secure the southern border and enact an international policy based on “peace through strength."

“In the world of business, if you want to get things done, you have to compromise,” Hovde said. “I will work with anybody to try to advance the country and this state's interests.”

Hovde said he would hold Baldwin accountable for her record in Congress over the past 25 years, accusing her of leaving the country “riddled with debt.” A multimillionaire, he also promised not to take corporate special interest money during the campaign.

“I can’t be bought and will not be bought," Hovde said.

Baldwin’s campaign branded Hovde as “an out-of-touch megamillionaire” in a fundraising email sent minutes after his campaign website went live. Baldwin’s campaign said Hovde would “rubber stamp” the agenda of Republican Senate Leader Mitch McConnell.

“Hovde would vote to pass a national abortion ban, raise taxes on working families and seniors while cutting Social Security and Medicare, and repeal the Affordable Care Act,” Wisconsin Democratic Party spokesperson Arik Wolk said separately.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee, the campaign arm of Senate Republicans, is backing Hovde.

“Eric Hovde’s experience as a job creator rather than a career politician makes him a strong candidate to flip Wisconsin’s Senate seat this year,” said Montana Sen. Steve Daines, chair of the NRSC, in a statement.

Other Republicans are considering challenging Hovde for the nomination. Scott Mayer, a Franklin businessman, and former Milwaukee County Sheriff [*David Clarke*](https://apnews.com/article/elections-wisconsin-presidential-elections-election-2020-subpoenas-b2883b80e7c322e1794835cf3537b9fa) are also considering Senate runs. Other higher profile Republicans, including U.S. Reps. Tom Tiffany and Mike Gallagher, opted against running.

Mayer’s campaign had no comment Tuesday.

Wisconsin's primary is scheduled for Aug. 13.

In his 2012 race, Hovde described himself as a free-market conservative. He campaigned as a supporter of overturning the Affordable Care Act, the national health care law signed by former President Barack Obama, an abortion opponent and supporter of overturning Roe v. Wade. The U.S. Supreme Court did that in 2022, fueling wins by Democratic candidates that year who supported abortion rights. Baldwin has already said she plans to [*highlight abortion rights*](https://apnews.com/article/kamala-harris-abortion-biden-2024-election-560bc2bbdf036c18b6601ced44a62b50) in this year’s Senate race.

Hovde did not mention health care or abortion in his announcement event Tuesday. He did not take questions.

Hovde’s business empire includes Hovde Properties, a real estate development company founded by his grandfather in 1933, and three banking companies. He is CEO of Sunwest Bank, has appeared in television commercials for them that air out west, and owns a $7 million estate in Laguna Beach, California, in addition to his property in Madison.

He returned to Madison in 2011 after living in Washington, D.C., for 24 years.

Democrats have branded Hovde as a carpetbagger who left his California mansion to run for Senate in Wisconsin, where he was born and raised.

Hovde didn't address that, but he did recount his great-grandparents settling in Wisconsin and his grandfather's founding of a real estate business near Madison that he and his family now run.

Hovde referred to former President Ronald Reagan, but did not mention Donald Trump while trying to strike a bipartisan tone.

“We’re allowing ***politics*** and political parties to divide us and that is wrong," he said. "We’re ripping apart our families and our friendships over ***politics***. We can’t tackle these major problems we’re facing in this country without coming together. We need to come together as a people.”

Baldwin most recently won reelection by 11 points in a race that was seen as a model for how to run as a Democrat statewide in Wisconsin. She is a tireless campaigner, garnered broad support, including among independents and voters outside of Democratic strongholds in Madison and Milwaukee, and she raised millions of dollars to fuel the successful bid.

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