

Rebecca Cooke advocated for defunding "brute police" enforcement and campaigned with one of the most anti police candidates in Wisconsin history who wanted to defund the police and release violent criminals into our communities.

In 2024, Cooke Called For Defunding "Brute Police Enforcement"

In 2024, Cooke Called For Defunding "Brute Police Enforcement." "When it comes to policing, I'm a proponent of allocating greater funds to root causes of the issue, rather than brute police enforcing," said Cooke during the call. Cooke's comments, which echo rhetoric from the far-left 'defund the police' movement, could complicate her efforts to position herself as a moderate in the race. In the past few weeks, Cooke has been running ads portraying herself as a middle-of-the-road candidate." (Alana Goodman, "Wisconsin Democratic House Candidate Called for Defunding 'Brute Police Enforcement,'" [The Washington Free Beacon](#), 10/4/24)

Cooke Supported The Senate Campaign Of Mandela Barnes Who Advocated For Defunding Police And Releasing Violent Criminals From Prison

Cooke Voted For Mandela Barnes For Senate And Supported His Campaign:

 **Rebecca Cooke** 
@RebeccaforWI

#627 and #628 - Just voted at Wheaton Town Hall with my mama cat for @pfaff4congress, @Tony4WI, @TheOtherMandela and Democrats all down ticket. Polls are open 7a-8p today >> get all the info you need here: [myvote.wi.gov](#)

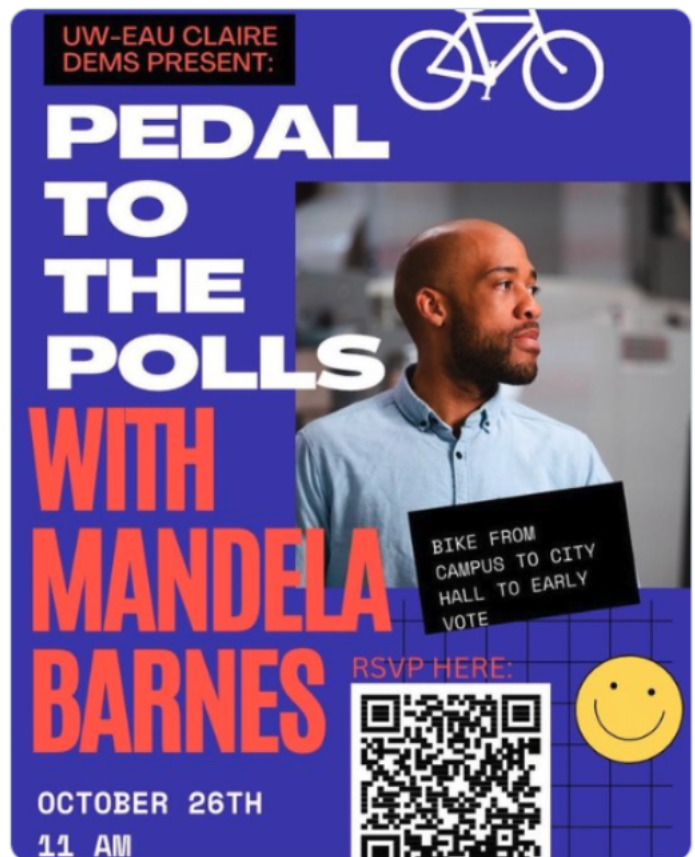


12:24 PM · Nov 8, 2022

 **Rebecca Cooke** 
@RebeccaforWI

TOMORROW >> Pedal to the polls with @uwecdems + @TheOtherMandela. It's time to early vote ya'll.

RSVP >> [mobilize.us/mandelabarnesf...](#)



9:51 AM · Oct 25, 2022

(Rebecca Cooke, [Twitter](#), 11/8/22; Rebecca Cooke, [Twitter](#), 10/25/22)

In March 2019, Barnes And Cooke Joined Small Business Owners At Red's Mercantile To Hear From Them About Owning A Small Business And How Red Letter Grant Has

Connected And Impacted Them. “Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes was in town Saturday, to learn more about a local organization helping female entrepreneurs reach their goals. Barnes joined several small business owners at Red’s Mercantile in Eau Claire, to hear from them about what it means to be a woman who owns a small business, and how the Red Letter Grant has connected and impacted them. The Red Letter Grant provides female entrepreneurs, across Western Wisconsin, with start-up capital and a network to succeed. Officials behind the grant hope it can grow to offer support statewide. ‘You see a big gap, not just in leadership, but in mentorship and role models, so you don’t really see women always at the helm,’ said Rebecca Cooke, board president of the Red Letter Grant. ‘I think there’s a lot of value having women, both in leadership and as entrepreneurs in our state.’ Cooke hopes Barnes grasped the importance of elevating women-owned businesses across the state, and helps bring attention to the challenges they face compared to their male counterparts.” (Samantha Wensel, “Lt. Governor Barnes Joins In On Women Small Business Discussion In Eau Claire,” [WQOW](#), 3/16/19)

- **WQOW Headline: “Lt. Governor Barnes Joins In On Women Small Business Discussion In Eau Claire”** (Samantha Wensel, “Lt. Governor Barnes Joins In On Women Small Business Discussion In Eau Claire,” [WQOW](#), 3/16/19)

PHOTOS:



(Rebecca Cooke, [Twitter](#), 12/7/23)



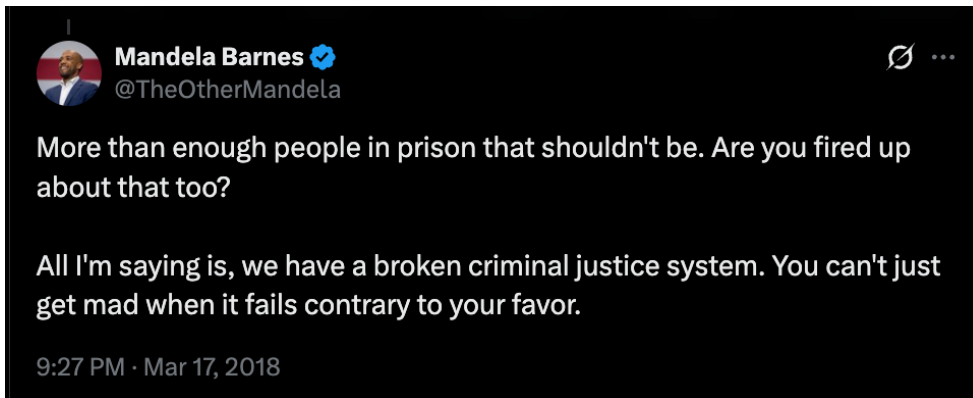
(Samantha Wensel, "Lt. Governor Barnes Joins In On Women Small Business Discussion In Eau Claire," [WQOW](#), 3/16/19)



(Sheng Elizabeth Lor, [Facebook](#), 8/16/22)

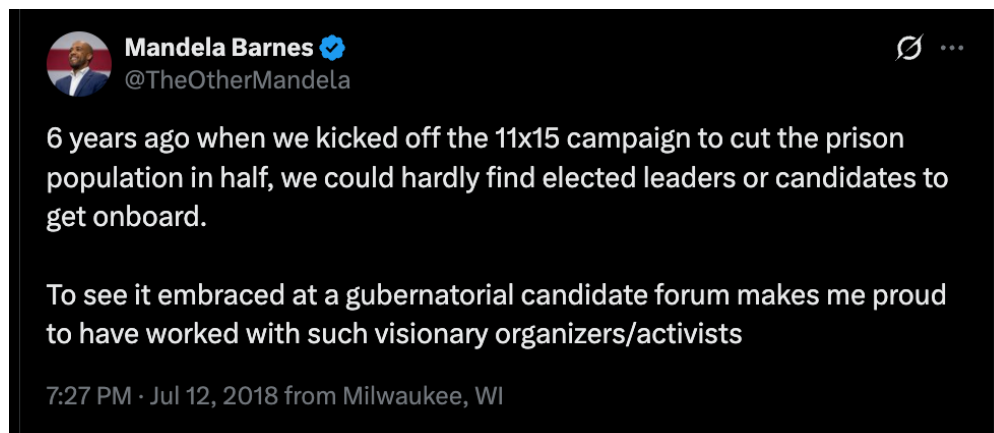
During The 2018 Lieutenant Governor Campaign, Barnes Continued To Campaign On Decreasing The Prison Population By Half

Barnes In March 2018: "More Than Enough People In Prison That Shouldn't Be" (Mandela Barnes, [Twitter](#), 3/17/18)



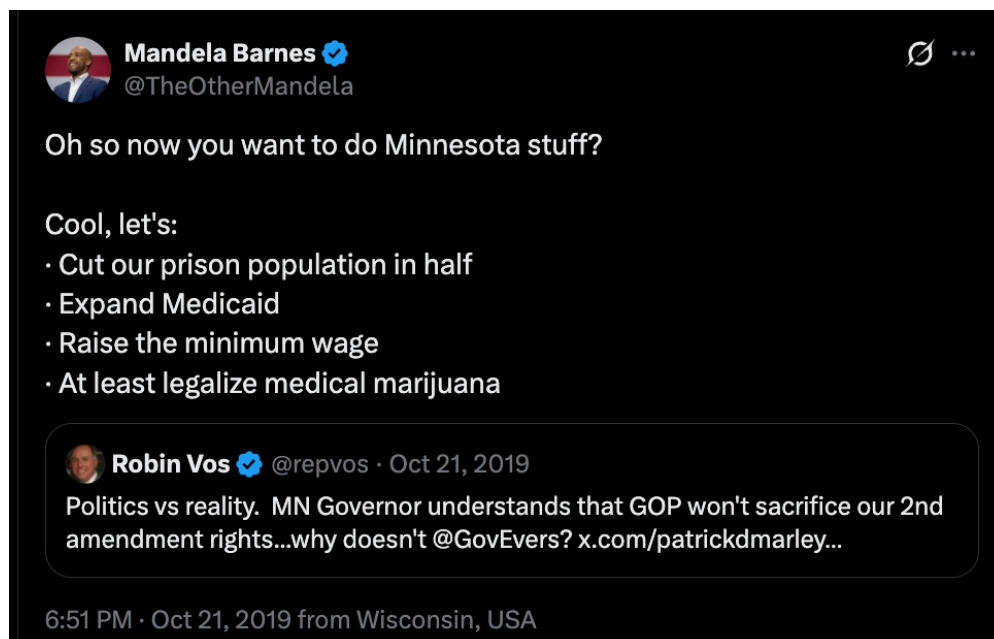
(Mandela Barnes, [Twitter](#), 3/17/18)

On July 12, 2018, Barnes Noted That When The 11x15 Campaign Started They Could Not Find Elected Leaders Or Candidates To Support It. (Mandela Barnes, [Twitter](#), 7/12/18)



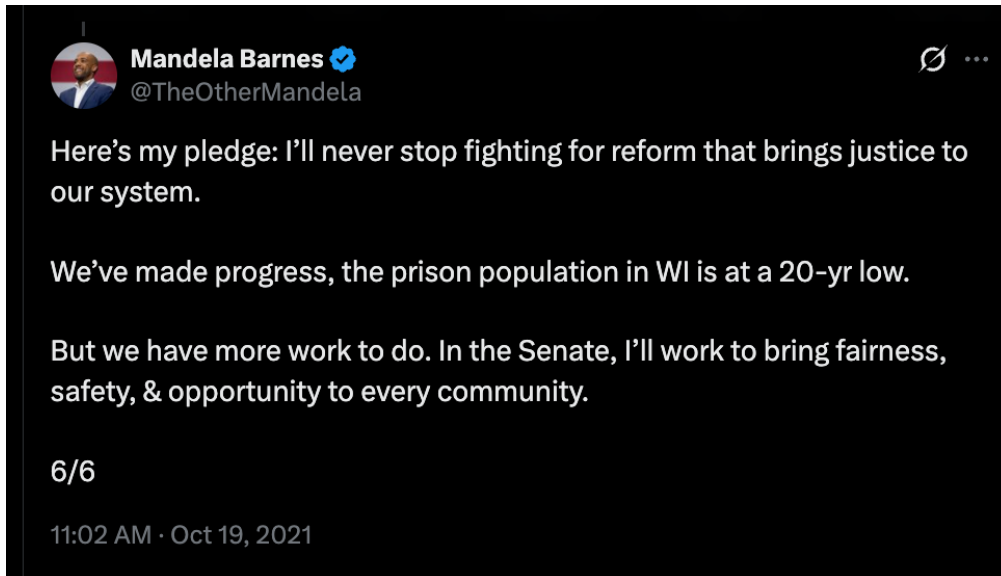
(Mandela Barnes, [Twitter](#), 7/12/18)

On October 21, 2019, Barnes Called For Cutting Wisconsin's Prison Population In Half. (Mandela Barnes, [Twitter](#), 10/21/19)



(Mandela Barnes, [Twitter](#), 10/21/19)

In October 2021, Barnes Boasted That “The Prison Population In WI Is At A 20-Yr Low.” (Mandela Barnes, [Twitter](#), 10/19/21)



(Mandela Barnes, [Twitter](#), 10/19/21)

VIDEO: In August 2018, Barnes Called For Releasing Half Of All Prison Inmates To “Make Our Communities Safer.” BARNES: “I’m a former State Representative. I served two terms in the Assembly and prior to that I was an organizer for a group called MICAHA, Which is Milwaukee Intercity Congregations Allied For Hope. A group of interfaith social justice organizations. The work that they do is about jobs and economic development, education, immigration reform, and treatment instead of prisons which has been in the news a lot lately because we spend a billion and a half dollars each year to keep people in prisons in Wisconsin. Which is very unfortunate because we can cut our population in half, we can make our communities safer, and we can save money in the process.” (Mandela Barnes, [Speech To Our Revolution](#), La Crosse, WI, 8/9/18) MINUTE 1:07 - 1:40

VIDEO: On January 22, 2018, Barnes Said He Would Support Removing Penalties For Parole Violations In Order To Decrease Recidivism Rates. SPEAKER: “Several states have been able to reduce prison numbers, closed prisons, and avoided building new ones as we’ve heard this morning by reducing the rate of reincarceration for probation, parole, and supervision rule violations. This action required executive level changes in their corrections policies in those states and the operations for people on probation, parole or supervision, but have not been convicted of a new crime. Would you favor making such changes in Wisconsin’s correction policies and operations and what steps would you take to make those changes? Take it away.” BARNES: “To first answer the question I would say yes. I would absolutely support making those changes. For those in the back if you didn’t hear me I said yes I absolutely support those measures. I supported them in the legislature. I supported them before I was a legislator when I was an organizer with MICAHA.” (Mandela Barnes, [WISDOM Forum On Revocations](#), 1/22/18) MINUTE 0:27 - 1:25

VIDEO: On January 22, 2018, Barnes Suggested Instead Of Returning A Parolee Back To Prison For A Parole Violation The State Could Subsidize Their Annual Salary. BARNES: “If you just break down the numbers, I’m Mandela Barnes and I’m running for Lt. Governor, and the numbers say we spend \$147 million dollars on average in 2015 to send almost 3,000 people back for a crimeless revocation. That is... that comes out to about \$33,000 per year per person that we send back. There is a lot of things we can do with \$33,000 per person, right? That means we can send that person back to school rather than sending them back to prison. We could send them to a job training program instead of back to prison. We could actually subsidize an annual salary for someone’s employment instead of sending them back to prison.” (Mandela Barnes, [WISDOM Forum On Revocations](#), 1/22/18) MINUTE 1:28 - 2:10

VIDEO: On January 22, 2018, Barnes Said He Was Happy Reducing Prison Populations “Is Now Sexy.” BARNES: “I’m happy that we are all here. I’m happy that we are all talking about it now that criminal justice reform and reducing prison populations is now sexy. It is now a thing that leading candidates are talking about because 10 years ago people would have ran away from this issue. People would have not shown up to a forum likes this because they would have been scared that they would have looked soft on crime. Let me say that the DOC should be the DOI because it is the Department of Incorection.” (Mandela Barnes, [WISDOM Forum On Revocations](#), 1/22/18) MINUTE 2:16 - 2:42

Barnes Continued To Push For Reducing The Prison Population During The COVID-19 Pandemic And Well Into His Lieutenant Governor Tenure

VIDEO: On June 2, 2020, Barnes Said Regardless Of COVID-19 He Wanted To Reduce The Prison Population. RIVERA: “Lt. Governor, what are the administration plans to reduce the prison population which Covid has exposed as a public health issue, due to its overcrowding? Is there something you can update us on that?” BARNES: “Know that a number of people have their release already, but that is an ongoing conversation between the Governor and the Department of Corrections Secretary Kevin Carr. It is up to the Secretary and the parole commission to determine who is eligible for that early release. I am 100 percent with you that whether it is Covid-19 or not Covid-19 we have a responsibility to reduce our prison population because there are still too many people who are behind bars for non violent offenses. That remains that regardless if the pandemic was here or not I want to see happen.” (Mandela Barnes, [Interview With South Side Organizing Center](#), 6/2/20) MINUTE 30:00 - 31:04

VIDEO: On February 25, 2021, Barnes Said He Ran State Legislature And Lt Governor Based On “That Bold Vision” That Included The 11x15 Campaign To Release 11,000 Inmates By 2015. BARNES: “It was a chance for us to push a bold vision. My very first race in 2012 I wanted to push a bold vision. The things that were going on in the community, the things that were going on statewide. This was in the wake of Act 10. Now that we are in the tenth anniversary of Act 10. I ran for State Rep the following session. The very next election. I knew that part of the reason we got there was we didn’t think bold enough and we didn’t do enough to build power. Running for State Rep and running for State Senate it was still about that bold vision. Running for Lt. Govenror I wanted to make sure that we could talk about these things state wide like the issues that people would have traditionally stayed away from. I wanted to make sure we were talking about them because the reason we weren’t winning elections is we were too afraid to talk about the real things happening all across Wisconsin in housholds in all 72 counties and back to my organizing days. Now that was 2011 so 10 years ago I think about when we launced our 11x15 campaign and that was to reduce Wisconsin’s prison population by 11,000 by 2015.” (Mandela Barnes, [Real Talk With Henry Sanders](#), 2/25/21) MINUTE 25:50 – 27:22

In August 2018, An Associated Press Fact Check Reported If Wisconsin Released Half Of Its Prison Population Violent Criminals Would Be Released After Evers Claimed It Was “A Goal That’s Worth Accomplishing”

In August 2018, An Associated Press Fact Check Reported If Wisconsin Released Half Of Its Prison Population, Violent Criminals Would Be Released. “A campaign spokeswoman confirmed Evers supports an early release program, but only for nonviolent offenders. When asked for a specific prison plan, his campaign said one would be released later in the campaign. Evers campaign website says he would advocate to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for crimes, expand drug courts, and keep people who violate certain parole rules, such as failing drug or alcohol tests, out of prison. Walker points out that Wisconsin housed 23,519 inmates last year and 67 percent committed a violent offense. To halve the prison population, he reasons, some inmates with a violent criminal history would have to be released. Experts say he’s right. ‘It’s absolutely true that over half the prison population is there for violent offenses,’ said Michelle Phelps, a professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota. ‘It’s going to be difficult to cut the prison population in half — even dramatically — without talking about violent offenses.’ The state could halve the number of people entering into prisons every year by

keeping nonviolent offenders out of prison, but could not cut the prison population itself in half, said John Pfaff, a criminal law professor at Fordham University who reviewed Wisconsin's prison admissions and population." (Amanda Seitz, "AP FACT CHECK: Walker Right On Wisconsin Prison Population," [Associated Press](#), 8/11/18)

- **In 2018, 67 Percent Of Inmates Had Committed A Violent Offense.** "Walker points out that Wisconsin housed 23,519 inmates last year and 67 percent committed a violent offense. To halve the prison population, he reasons, some inmates with a violent criminal history would have to be released. Experts say he's right." (Amanda Seitz, "AP FACT CHECK: Walker Right On Wisconsin Prison Population," [Associated Press](#), 8/11/18)

VIDEO: In July 2018, During A Democratic Gubernatorial Debate, Tony Evers Said Cutting The Prison Population In Half Was "A Goal That's Worth Accomplishing." MODERATOR: "The Multiracial interfaith organization MICAHA launched a campaign in 2011 to cut the prison population in half from 22,000 to 11,000. It now sits at 23,000. Do you support that original goal and how would you balance reducing the prison population and public safety?" EVERS: "Absolutely and that is a goal worth accomplishing. This isn't about being soft on crime. I know that is what Attorney General Schimel is trying to make this about. It is about being smart on crime." (Tony Evers, [Democratic Gubernatorial Debate](#), 7/12/18) MINUTE 33:44 - 34:11