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## Democrat seeks to replace Dr. Neal Dunn in Congress



**Libby Cagle prepares to introduce Brandon Peters to the audience.**

### Story, Photos and Video

By Jeff M. Hardison © Feb. 6, 2018 at 11:08 p.m.

**CEDAR KEY** -- Brandon Peters is the first Democratic Party candidate to tell the Action Coalition of Cedar Key about his intent to replace U.S. Rep. (Dr.) Neal Dunn, M.D. (R-District 2 Florida).



**Brandon Peters speaks about why he believes he can better serve the people in Congress than the current member of the United States House of Representatives serves the people here.**

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[https://youtu.be/E4\\_4QK-QJCI](https://youtu.be/E4_4QK-QJCI)

In this video, Brandon Peters speaks about politicians becoming entrenched in Washington or Tallahassee rather than representing their constituents from the districts from whence they were elected.



Barbara Byrum is the regional campaign coordinator for the candidate.



People listen to the candidate.

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Peters spoke with the coalition Monday night (Feb. 5) when they met on the second floor of the Cedar Key Arts Center, 457 Second St.

Any number of Democrats or Republicans seeking to show why they should be elected can approach the Action Coalition of Cedar Key as a place to tell about themselves.

“The mission of the Action Coalition of Cedar Key is to protect our form of representative democracy from all corrupting domestic and foreign influences,” the group notes on its mission statement. The group is not in favor of one party over another.

During his scheduled hour-long town hall event, which went beyond the 7 p.m. planned ending time so that people could speak to the candidate individually, Peters mentioned that Dunn's staff answers the phone "Dr. Dunn's office."

Beyond holding fast to his title from have a previously successful practice as a medical doctor, Peters mentioned that Rep. Dunn also has been a lobbyist. Those are parts of some of the many reasons Peters believes he can better serve the people of this 18-county district than Rep. Dunn has so far.

There are more concrete foundational reasons to pick Peters over Dunn, this candidate showed when voters look at the perspective of having a person to actually represent the people of this part of Florida in the U.S. House.

Florida's 2nd Congressional District is the largest congressional district in Florida by land area and consists of all of Bay, Calhoun, Dixie, Franklin, Gilchrist, Gulf, Jackson, Lafayette, Levy, Liberty, Suwannee, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington counties, and portions of Columbia, Holmes, Jefferson, Leon and Marion counties.

Dunn appears by his voting record, Peters said, to be helping the very rich people – the billionaires, when there are not that many billionaires in this part of Florida.

Peters explained his stance on a number of initial issues as well as giving the listeners a chance to see how he intends to accomplish his job as a representative of the people in Congress. This potential future United States House of Representatives member from Florida's Second District said he expects to be held accountable for his promises made during this campaign.

The evening started before the 6 p.m. as coalition members socialized and enjoyed some of the delicious hors d'oeuvres and drinks, which were also enjoyed after the main event.

Libby Cagle introduced Barbara Byrum as the regional campaign manager for Peters. Byrum is also active in the group - Citizens for and Engaged Electorate – which is another group that seeks to help keep America as a free country.

## **BRANDON PETERS**

Peters, who was born in Jacksonville, grew up in Winter Park (Orange County) and now lives in Williston with his wife Stacey Peters. They each have two sons by different marriages and they have quasi-adopted a fifth boy who is a friend of one of the middle sons.

That almost-son lost his mother to cancer, and a number of factors led to the couple offering and him accepting them to be his substitute parents. Stacey Peters was unable to attend the get-together that evening, because she is the caregiver for her parents, and her father needed her help that evening.

Peters told the audience that he has visited all 67 counties of Florida, and he and his

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wife chose Levy County for their residence. They live near the Goethe State Forest.

## **POLITICAL STANCE**

Politicians at the federal level, and even at the state level, Peters said, have become “too comfortable” as they are complacent and non-responsive to their constituents.

It is not just Rep. Dunn, he said, but a number of others who find places to live in Georgetown.

“They lay down permanent roots,” Peters said, “and they don’t want to come home (from Washington, D.C.).”

This behavior eventually leads to “abominations such as the tax reform bill we saw in December,” Peters said as he made reference to the most recent changes to the federal income tax laws.

Rep. Dunn, Peters said, was not elected as the “doctor for the 706,000 people in the Second District; although if you call his Washington office and they answer ‘Dr. Dunn’s Office.’

“I think he may no longer deserve the title ‘doctor,’” Peters said, “since he no longer practices medicine. You ask yourself, ‘Well what should I call him?’

“He (Dunn) was a licensed real estate broker too,” Peters said. “He had lots of real estate investments.”

Real estate investors will see a benefit from the revised tax bill that was just passed by Congress, Peters said.

Peters then mentioned that Dunn was a registered lobbyist.

“If there is one problem in Washington, D.C. that is seen today,” Peters said, “it is that the lobbyist have their claws sunk deeply into the flesh of our Congress.”

The candidate expressed his opinion about Dunn in that regard.

“We certainly don’t need another lobbyist in Congress,” Peters said, “but that is what we have in this district.”

Peters went on to say he has documentation that Dunn was a lobbyist, and now Dunn is in the halls of Congress making decisions.

Peters said Dunn’s choices in votes reflect the special interests of people who do not live in this district of Florida.

“Why Congressman Dunn,” Peters asks, “did you accept the \$7,500 campaign contribution from ‘Big Sugar’ when we don’t grow commercial sugar in this district? Well, they bought your vote. That’s the simple answer.”

Peters said the tax bill that Dunn helped champion as a result of “Big Sugar” and other huge corporate interests is “indefensible” and the voters are “smarter than you think.”

Peters wants change.

“We need to see change in the culture of Washington, D.C., to throw the lobbyists to the curb and get a class of Congressional freshmen, and by that, I mean men and women, who will truly represent the interests of their constituents instead of lobbyists. And not get cozy in an apartment in Georgetown or Crystal City and make that their last stop.

“My last stop is Levy County,” Peters said. “Whether I win or lose this election, I am very happy here.”

The deciding factor for Peters to run, he said, was his wife being tired of hearing him yell at the television set. She told him to stop complaining on Facebook and stop

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tweeting on Twitter.

Peters shared with the people that his family has a tradition of public service. His mother served two terms on the Winter Park City Commission. His maternal grandfather was President Dwight D. Eisenhower's deputy undersecretary of the United States Army. His cousin Leslie "Les" Aspin Jr. was President Bill Clinton's first secretary of defense.

While he has public service on both parties in his family's tradition, Peters said he is not wedded to the ideas, beliefs and values of either the Democrats or Republicans. Peters is running as a Democrat, he said, but he is seeking no national endorsement from either party.

He would not reject a national endorsement from either major party, but he is not seeking them.

Candidates expanding personal power and preserving it at all costs, is one of the driving forces that has led national politics to reach the point where it is today, Peters said.

The phone banks run by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Peters said, are not going to see him logging time there – even if that is how the party has determined who gets which assignments in Congress.

Determining committee assignments by how much a Congressman raises for the party, he said, is not representative democracy. Instead, Peters said, that is "... a form of authoritarianism that traces its way back up to the majority leader, the minority leader, and their whips."

The 50-year-old man made it clear that he is not going to do whatever the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee wants.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

### **FOCUS ON THE ECONOMY**

Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for full-time workers is something Peters endorses. Since part-time workers rarely see benefits, he believes that minimum wage should be \$16.50. This would exist in every county of every state.

"We need money to trickle up for a change," he said."

This increase in minimum wage would be brought about gradually, he said, to reduce the odds of runaway inflation.

Peters thinks this new minimum wage rate can be completely phased in within three years.

### **MEDICARE FOR ALL**

Peters supports the idea of Medicare for all Americans.

"It's unthinkable that we are the last industrialized country on this Earth that doesn't guarantee access to good healthcare as a matter of record until the (patient reaches) the sixties."

### **REAL TAX REFORM**

Peters said he supports real tax reform, in contrast with what he sees now as "temporary gimmicks" for America's middle class.

"I believe in a progressive tax system," Peters said. "I think it has never been truer that from those to whom much is given, much is expected – as with taxation and everything else."

### **MEET WITH PEOPLE**

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Rep. Dunn likes to go to photo opportunities, Peters said. He does not like to hold town hall meetings.

“The lack of interaction (by Dunn) with constituents is abysmal,” Peters said. “I like these meet the candidate events, where you can see me and kind of kick the tires. I don’t call them ‘Meet the candidate events.’ I call them ‘Kick the candidate events.’”

## **TRANSPARENT CONGRESSMAN**

There has been \$17 million spent to settle suits against congressmen for harassment of staffers and others over the years, Peters said.

Peters said he will sleep in his office. He wants “Nanny Cams” cameras with mikes in congressional offices of the 538 members of Congress (435 House members, three territorial representatives plus 100 Senate members), so that the taxpayers can see and hear what is going on in those offices.

While this bill he will propose may not happen across-the-board, he said he is willing to fund it for his constituents so that the people can see and hear what is happening in his office.

“Is that the kind of congressman you want representing you in DC?” he asked. “Someone who has nothing to hide. Someone who wants to focus on the economy. Someone who disdains the elitists of both (major) national parties. If so, give me a second look. If not, stay with the status quo.”

## **CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

Based on what happened with McCain-Feingold, and Citizens United, as a trial lawyer for 26 years, Peters said it is his opinion that to put an end to the nonsense one of two things must happen. Over time, the laws and decisions have let money from independent groups pour into campaigns.

Peters said one of the two options is for the United States Constitution to have a revision to The First Amendment.

The more likely method to fix finance of campaigns, Peters said, is to revise the system so that campaigns are publicly financed.

“Norway has campaigns that are publicly financed,” Peters said. “Norway has the 15th best voter turnout in the world.”

No campaigning is allowed on television or radio in Norway, he said. He sees public financing of campaigns as a good solution to the enormous problem.

The United States is rated 120th in voter turnout in the world, Peters said.

## **RESTORING VOTING RIGHTS**

Peters recommends restoring convicted felons’ right to vote. By allowing more people the right to vote and publicly financing campaigns, he believes that in two generations Americans will see the participatory democracy as being something worth participating in.

To see more about Brandon Peters, there is a website. It is a <http://peters4congress.com/wp/>.