

Walker makes first presidential campaign stop in Iowa

Visiting Iowa today for the first time as a declared presidential candidate, Gov. Scott Walker sidestepped a question about whether he would seek campaign finance changes relating to this week's state Supreme Court decision.

With a backdrop of the baseball diamond scoreboard showing Iowa, a heart and Walker, the guy said he would leave it up to the courts to decide if national issue advocacy groups could coordinate with candidates as they now can do in Wisconsin following the John Doe decision.

"That's really not something we have looked at," Walker said. "I've tried to focus on issues that people ask me about. Other than reporters, nobody has asked me about that."

Walker also touched on the federal minimum wage, saying he does not want to change it and that his focus differs from that of others such as Hillary Clinton. He said he would find ways to give people the skills they need to make more than the minimum wage.

Walker also refused to comment, as other candidates have, on Donald Trump's campaign. He noted that coming in second to Trump in a recent poll is not necessarily bad news.

"I think we're doing pretty good considering I just announced Monday," he said, "and we're already in second place in the national polls."

Walker said the Election Day poll is the only one that matters, but he acknowledged that Iowa is an important step in his candidacy.

"I think the pathway for a Republican winning the presidency goes through the Midwest," he said.

Governor delivers message to Iowans

The press conference came after Walker spoke to about 200 people in a conference room at Modern Woodmen Park, the home field for The Quad Cities River Bandits minor league baseball team on the banks of the Mississippi River.

After requesting a moment of silence in honor of the Marines who were shot in Chattanooga, Tenn., yesterday, Walker hit on many topics common to his speeches: expanding the changes he made in Wisconsin to the rest of the country, building the U.S. military and repealing the Affordable Care Act

But he began with something new to those who have listened to his prior speeches in Iowa.

"I'm Scott Walker," he said. "I'm running for president. And I'm here to have your votes."

Walker said the Davenport stop is just the start of his campaign's Iowa focus, which will take him to all 99 counties in the state. He said his message is that America is a can-do country, and

his leadership will get the job done.

He used the battle with unions over Act 10 and his focus on reducing property taxes as examples of his leadership. And he drew a loud round of applause when he talked about de-funding Planned Parenthood and passing voter identification legislation.

"In Washington, they can't seem to get the job done," he said. "Well, you know what, it's not too late. Help is on the way. We can turn this country around going forward."

His plan for that, he said, includes protecting people from threats abroad and measuring success based on how many people no longer depend on the government. He said, if elected president, he would control federal regulations, such as those enforced by the EPA, "that are like a wet blanket on the American economy."

Walker also said he would adopt an "all of the above energy policy" that starts with "once and for all approving the Keystone pipeline."

Walker arrived at the event in an RV decorated with his presidential campaign colors and logo. He is traveling in the RV with his wife and sons along with a few friends.

After leaving Davenport, Walker had stops scheduled in Cedar Rapids and in Des Moines today, then five more Iowa events throughout the weekend.

Attendees on the fence

Many attendees at Walker's Davenport rally today said they like him but have not yet made up their minds on who will get their support.

Those attendees included 12-year-old Madison Phipps, the Junior Miss Scott County, which includes Davenport. Her mother, Paula, said they also have listened to Bobby Jindal and Marco Rubio.

"We just feel there needs to be a change," Paula Phipps said.

The two were accompanied by Miss Scott County Molly McDonnell, 19. She also said she is keeping an open mind about who she will back.

"I haven't got any opinion right now," she said. "I'm just gathering all the data."

Others at the rally said they have been impressed with Walker's record in Wisconsin, both in elections and in his battle with unions, but they still want to see more. Robert Martin, of Davenport, said he likes Walker but has been disappointed that the gov's stance on immigration has been in flux rather than firmly in favor of shutting down the border.

"I haven't made up my mind," Martin, 75, said. "It's between Scott Walker and Bush."

Another 75-year-old Davenport resident, John Moeller, said he was particularly impressed with Walker's fight with unions. Moeller, who is retired, said he used to work for John Deere and appreciates unions. But he said he also understands Walker's attempt to reduce the cost of doing business.

Still, Moeller said, he is undecided about who he will back, though Walker is near the top of the list.

"I've got a check in my pocket for him," Moeller said, "but that don't mean he's going to get one tomorrow."