

Minnesota Now (MPR) | Minnesota Now Brad Finstad will be Minnesota's newest member of Congress
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INTERVIEWER: Let's turn to Brad Finstad, a farmer, former legislator, and agriculture official in former President Donald Trump's administration. He won that 1st congressional district special election last night in southern Minnesota, so he'll be there for at least the rest of this year.

He's already running for re-election to a full two-year term in a race that will culminate this November.

Congressman-elect Finstad, thanks for joining us.

BRAD FINSTAD: Yeah, thanks for having me on.

INTERVIEWER: So the canvassing board meets on the 16th to certify the race. Have you heard how soon you'll be sworn in after that?

BRAD FINSTAD: It's still a little bit up in the air. I've had some communications with the speaker's office already today. And they're just giving me some of the details of the logistics of how it looks. The timing is still a little bit up in the air, but we've been told to be ready any time. So we'll just wait and see here.

There's a little bit of, I guess, interpretation for what the speaker's office and the US House can do in regards to the swearing in-- timing versus the canvassing board and what we do here in the state. So there's folks that are having those conversations and I guess I'm just ready to go.

INTERVIEWER: Depending on that timing and how vote scheduling works, there's a chance you'll be there when the budget prescription drug and climate bill, dubbed by democrats as the Inflation Reduction Act, comes up. Where do you stand on that bill?

BRAD FINSTAD: Yeah. So right now, as I've just got through this great Tuesday election-- two elections, trying to get my head around, all right, so where are we at? What is potentially possible here in the short-term in regards to votes? From what I've understood and what I've been able to read and dig into, I would for sure be a no vote for a couple of reasons.

But one, it definitely adds to the growth of government. It adds to the IRS. I just don't think the answer to our inflation problems and the prices at the gas pump are adding 87,000 IRS agents to the federal budget.

So there's a lot of things, obviously, I would like to look into more and read into more. But from what I'm seeing so far right now, I don't see how I would be voting for that.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any parts of it you could support if they were broken off one at a time?

BRAD FINSTAD: Yeah. So again, very early in that process for me just to understand what it's all entailed. I'm a firm believer that I take the role of sitting in a legislative body serious that you've got to take time to read the bills and understand what's in them. And so not having the chance yet to read it in its entirety or for sure exactly know what they will show as a final product, I want to put time into that.

I'm committed to that farmer mentality of rolling up my sleeves and making sure I'm a student of what's in front of me. And that's what I would commit to here.

INTERVIEWER: Easier being a farmer or a candidate?

BRAD FINSTAD: It's probably easier being a farmer, although there's some similarities. When you're on the campaign trail or when you decide to run for congress and have four elections in under six months, that can be very challenging. But when you hop in the tractor in the morning and take on the day's task, there's always something breaking down. So you got that same problem solver mentality in both, I guess.

INTERVIEWER: There are a lot of Republicans worked up right now over the raid on former President Trump's property in Mar a Lago Florida. Republicans in congress want an investigation into that. Do you agree with them?

BRAD FINSTAD: Well, I think it's important for the American people to get a chance to look at the warrant-- what justified the raid? Where did it come from? What were they looking for? What potential crimes were they trying to investigate?

And information is going to be key on this. And we're at a critical time where we just cannot give the American people even a hint or a feel that the politics of the day are weaponizing the department of justice. It's just a horrible move for our country.

So I think right now, we need to have the light of day shine upon this-- transparency, show us the warrants. Show us what caused this to happen. And let the American people see and decide from there.

INTERVIEWER: So you're already well into this campaign for the next term. How do you think being a seat-holder changes things, either better or worse?

BRAD FINSTAD: Well, I think it's probably going to be better from the standpoint that I take this very serious. And I'm looking forward to getting sworn in and really doing the job of serving in congress. And for me, that's really kind of the put your head down and get the work done type thing. So constituent service, making sure that folks in southern Minnesota, wherever they are at, have the opportunity to have access to the office-- and if there's challenges or things that communities need help with, I want to develop a team and a process that really just stands ready to deliver on results.

And for me, that just doesn't mean passing great legislation, but it means being there for communities when they need that extra phone call to agencies that they're trying to get help with and helping folks that are maybe struggling with the VA and whatnot, and really just doing the work of being in congress.

INTERVIEWER: That's Brad Finstad, who will replace former Republican representative Jim Hagedorn, who died this year. We'll be watching.

BRAD FINSTAD: Thank you.