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MOMENTUM BUILDS: INDEPENDENT MICHAEL BRIDGFORD RETURNING FROM HIGH-PROFILE WEST VIRGINIA SUMMIT AS RISING 'CANDIDATE TO WATCH' OF 2026 NATIONAL ELECTION CYCLE

Following a weekend strategy gathering with former U.S. Senator Joe Manchin and national independent leaders, Bridgford emerges as a fresh, pragmatic voice poised to break Washington's gridlock in Iowa's 1st District.

BETTENDORF, Iowa — July 28, 2026 — Returning from an energized weekend summit to launch the Independent Leadership Council in West Virginia hosted by former U.S. Senator Joe Manchin and national independent strategists, Independent candidate Michael Bridgford has been established as a breakout candidate to watch in the 2026 midterm elections.

Bridgford was invited as a featured leader at the national gathering of independent and pragmatic reform candidates, an initiative designed to build a powerful network of independent leaders capable of bringing balance back to Congress. Iowa's 1st Congressional District has emerged as one of the nation's most closely watched toss-up races, and national leaders are taking notice of Bridgford as the ideal "fresh face" who can disrupt a tired two-party rematch.

"For too long, Washington has been trapped in predictable partisan noise while everyday Americans pay the price," **said Michael Bridgford**. "Spending this weekend alongside Senator Manchin and a phenomenal group of problem-solvers reinforced what I hear every day on the trail in Iowa: voters are ready for common-sense leadership and new solutions to old problems. We aren't here to play party games; we're here to get things done for working families, farmers, and small business owners."

The West Virginia summit, which brought together policy strategists and reform leaders, highlighted how independent candidates can leverage pivotal seats to force both major parties toward practical solutions. Bridgford, a Bettendorf small business owner raised on a multi-generational family farm just outside the Quad Cities, stood out as a clear frontrunner among the new class of independent candidates.

With "No Party" voters officially making up the largest voting bloc in Iowa's 1st District, Bridgford's message of term limits, stopping congressional stock trading, and restoring fiscal sanity is striking a chord. Rather than appealing to party extremes, his campaign continues to draw strong support from disaffected Republicans, Democrats, and independents alike.

Riding a wave of national momentum from this past weekend being featured in *Time*, *CNN*, *The Hill*, *NPR* & more, Bridgford will continue to hit the campaign trail across eastern Iowa to connect directly with voters.

For more information about Michael Bridgford's campaign or to view upcoming campaign tour stops, visit www.bridgfordforiowa.com.

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