



DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF WISCONSIN

Weekly News From Your Wisconsin Democratic Party Chair

*Follow this newsletter to keep current on the events shaping our state and the work our party
is doing to win in 2022 and beyond.*

Dear friends across Wisconsin,

Tuesday night could have been a political bloodbath.

Republicans predicted a red wave. Far-right candidates ran for offices all over the state, cheered on by right-wing radio hosts and buoyed by money from the state GOP and dark-money groups. Republicans wanted to do, under Biden, the reverse of what Democrats had done under Trump: In 2018 and 2020, we Democrats won massively in the spring election. This year, the GOP thought the tides had turned. They spent, organized, and pushed. They absolutely might have won in every corner of the state.

But they didn't. Because we showed up too—and met their red wave with a blue one.

We won far more than political scientists would have forecast was possible. In fact, in a 50/50 state in a tough year for Democrats, we won more than we lost: out of the 276 races where we actively engaged as a state party—where candidates accepted our in-kind support and we invested in organizing, digital, and/or mail or other paid communications—we won 147 of the races. That's a win rate of 53%.

And a much larger number of races received volunteer support from county parties Democratic Party of Wisconsin members, in every corner of our state. I've heard from county

chairs all over the state about tough elections where, against the odds, the candidates aligned with our values fought and won.

How was this possible? We did it by showing up.

We did it by investing more—more of every kind of resource at our disposal—in more local races than our party had ever invested. And we did it because you, and the WisDems members you work with, pulled out all the stops to win local races even when no statewide Republican candidate was on the ballot.

Sure, there were losses. Many of them narrow, some of them not; many of them predictable, some of them jarring and unexpected. But that's always going to be the case. This state is almost perfectly evenly divided, according to both election history and to polls. And yes, we saw a frightening surge in GOP extremism, right-wing dark money, and candidates running divisive, race-baiting, hateful, and deceitful campaigns. We shouldn't sugar-coat the intensity of what the GOP brought to this election—not for a moment. And we should learn everything possible from our losses as well as our wins.

But we also shouldn't underestimate the extent of what, together, we achieved on Tuesday. Look at the school board races in Eau Claire, La Crosse, Fon du Lac, Oshkosh, Appleton, Janesville, Beloit, Holman, Sparta—and, my goodness, so many other places—and you don't see a red wave. You see candidate after candidate, supported by local Democrat after local Democrat, who stood firm for their values, mobilized their supporters, and won. Look at the diverse, history-making slate of Democrats who will soon be sworn in to local office. Look at the small races—like Pamela Gantz, who defeated fraudulent elector Kelly Ruh in a De Pere alder's race—and the big ones, like Cavalier Johnson defeating Bob Donovan by an even bigger margin than Tom Barrett had done in 2016.

In the main, despite some crossovers in both directions, Republicans won races in areas where Trump had won, and Democrats won in places Biden won. Here's one way to quantify this. Rebecca Kleefisch made news by announcing that she'd endorsed more than 100 candidates for local offices. By our count, 78 of her chosen candidates went on to win. What's

gone unmentioned is that 59 of those candidates won in municipalities or counties that Trump won, while just 19 won in Biden areas.

What we see is a state seething with political energy... and could go either way in November.

The Republicans were fired up. But we brought the fire, too. Fire as in energy, and FIRE as in our values: Fight, Include, Respect, and Empower. We worked across lines of race and ethnicity and geography and gender, lifting up communities all over our state. And because of that, far more Wisconsinites will be served by elected officials who actually believe in public service. The only true measure of our work is its impact on people's lives. Because of the mayors, school board members, city council members, county board supervisors, and other officials you just played a critical role in electing, Wisconsinites' lives are going to get better.

Our next battle—enormous battles—are before us. We must reelect Governor Evers. We must defeat Ron Johnson. We must elect Democrats up and down the ballot. But let's also take a breath, to thank all of those who ran and worked so hard, win or lose, and to celebrate who far we've come together.

I couldn't be more grateful to work with you. And I'm proud to be, like you, a Wisconsin Democrat.

In solidarity,

Ben

FIGHT

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's Historic Confirmation

President Joe Biden fulfilled his promise of nominating the first Black woman to the Supreme Court and yesterday, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson made history with her confirmation as our next justice. After a demanding confirmation process rife with Republican obstruction and

contempt, it's clear that Judge Jackson will be a fantastic jurist on the nation's highest court.

Though there was broad bipartisan support for Judge Jackson in the public — include Republican senators themselves, noting her [list of qualifications](#) and her “[demonstrated judicial independence](#)” — Ron Johnson voted against confirming one of the most qualified candidates ever nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court.

As **Chair Ben Wikler** [said in an official statement](#) on Judge Jackson's confirmation, “Wisconsin and the United States will be better off with Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson sitting on the highest court in our land – her qualifications are second to none and her record shows she is someone who will always fight for fairness and justice. Today's vote not only adds a brilliant legal mind to the Supreme Court but will also ensure the Supreme Court better reflects the diversity of Wisconsin and our nation.”



President Biden and Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson celebrate Judge Jackson's confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court at the White House on Thursday.

Governor Evers Continues To Invest In Students' Mental Health

Following his announcement [last week](#), investing in Wisconsin telehealth services, Governor Evers announced a [\\$15 million investment in mental health support](#) to school districts across

the state.

The funds are part of Gov. Evers' "Get Kids Ahead Initiative," designed to address announced during his 2022 State of the State address.. The additional funds can be used to hire and support mental health navigators, provide mental health first aid and trauma-based care training and provide family assistance programs.

"These funds will go directly towards whatever mental health support and services our kids need so they can be successful both in and out of the classroom to help them grow, learn, and get ahead," Gov. Evers [said](#).



Gov. Evers at Pouring Cats & Dogs in Medford, promoting Main Street Bounceback grants that have enabled business to move into vacant storefronts along main streets in every county of Wisconsin.

President Biden Delivering For Postal Service, No Thanks to Wisconsin Republicans

This week, President Biden signed the Postal Service Reform Act into law — the most

significant overhaul the U.S. Postal Service has seen in over 20 years. The bill focuses on reforming USPS, focusing on the complications that came to light during the pandemic, including delays in delivery and a lack of transparency.

The Postal Service Reform Act guarantees [six-day delivery](#), ensuring prompt deliveries of these crucial items across the state. It also guarantees on-time delivery for necessary bills paid through the mail, taking away the fear and stress of a missed payment. Wisconsinites no longer have to worry if their parents' or grandparents' medication refills will be delayed or if their electricity bill will arrive before its' due date.

Despite these, and [additional provisions](#), Wisconsin Republicans continued to play partisan games and vote against the bill. Both Representative Bryan Steil and Senator Ron Johnson refused to vote for the Postal Service Reform Act. Rep. Steil was the only Wisconsin Representative — both Democratic and Republican — to vote against this critical bill. Continuing his pattern of voting [against bettering Wisconsinites](#), Senator Johnson voted against investing in USPS.

Ramthun Follows Kleefisch, Tommy Thompson to Mar-A-Lago

Tim Ramthun made his pilgrimage to Mar-a-Lago this week to court Donald Trump's endorsement. Ramthun, however, isn't the only candidate in the governor's race who has made the trip to Florida in recent weeks.

Both Tommy Thompson and Rebecca Kleefisch [have also made the rounds](#) at Mar-a-Lago, but Kleefisch in particular has been eerily quiet on the trip. She knows she needs the endorsement since she is facing [lackluster poll numbers](#) and the [threats of more primary opponents](#).

Ramthun's Florida trip comes as he's declared himself the race's frontrunner, telling the [Pete Santilli Show](#) last Friday that after only five weeks on the campaign trail and based on the results of scientifically-sound straw polls, he is "essentially in first place." Ramthun also went on the offensive against his opponents in the same interview, explaining that "I'm beating people who have been running for governor for four years. The gal that they wanted to make, the establishment pick they wanted to make 'the one,' I'm taking her out in multiple counties."

We'll have to wait and see if Ramthun manages to land the biggest endorsement in the race – but he does have all the right qualifications: Ramthun's entire campaign is focused on overturning Trump's loss. As Trump told Tim Ramthun himself, "you're my kind of guy."



Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson celebrates his historic victory Tuesday night.

INCLUDE & RESPECT

Candidates of Color Achieve Historic Firsts in Local Elections Across Wisconsin

Diverse candidates achieved historic firsts in races across the state Tuesday, winning election to local government and school boards and helping to build a more representative democracy for us all.

In Barron, Isaak Mohamed became the first Somali-born candidate elected to city council. Having fled Somalia in 2006, Mohamed was granted asylum in the United States in 2013 and became a U.S. citizen in 2018.

In Fond du Lac, Antonio Godfrey Sr. became the first Black candidate elected to the Fond du Lac School Board. After coming just seven votes short last year, Godfrey ran again – and won!

And in Milwaukee, Mayor Cavalier Johnson made history as Milwaukee's first Black elected mayor!

[Read more from WPR on the many historic firsts achieved in local races around Wisconsin.](#)



Celebrating Hmong Heritage Month with Pheng Thao's Historic Election Win

This Hmong Heritage Month, WisDems is celebrating Pheng Thao's historic win!

Pheng Thao is the first Hmong American elected to serve on the Appleton School Board, receiving the most votes out of all eight candidates. Thao will be able to bring his 20 years of experience in community building and violence prevention to the Board and WisDems is so excited to continue to support Thao.

[Celebrate Pheng's historic win and join us from 12-12:30 PM on Wed, April 13 for a Facebook Live interview](#) to learn more about Pheng's journey and vision for Appleton's public schools!

EMPOWER The Grassroots

Calling all Rural WisDems Party Unit Leaders!

WisDems is proud to work again with [Movement Labs](#) to offer significant support to county parties in rural and ex-urban areas through their Rural Power Lab program for the 2022 election cycle!

Rural Power Lab helps Democratic County Parties' organizing efforts to improve the Democratic brand in rural areas and works alongside our existing county parties and year-round organization program.

[Sign up here for an open house to learn more](#) and [read about the programs and tracks in this application memo.](#)

County parties have the option to [apply for volunteer recruitment and training \(track 1\) AND training and quarterly \\$500 grants for completing monthly actions \(track 2\)](#) or can opt out of the program if you don't think it's a good fit for your county. The deadline to opt out or apply for the program is April 27th.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to team@ruralpowerlab.org. You can also visit www.ruralpowerlab.org for more information and easy access to the application materials.

Free Candidate Resource Portal

In preparation for an exciting election year, WisDems has launched a free 2022 Candidate Resource Portal to support candidates across the state with a variety of campaign resources.

If you're interested in accessing the Candidate Resource Portal, you can request access at [this link](#) or by going to the Candidate Resources button at the bottom of our website. Each member of your campaign team must fill out the form individually to receive an access password.

In addition to these incredible resources, don't forget to check out the resources below, as well:

- **VAN Access.** VAN or VoteBuilder is our database of voter file information, plus the tools to make phone banks, maps for canvassing, mailing lists, and more. Candidates can apply for access [here](#).
- **Candidate Question Form.** [This form](#) is the best place for candidates to go if they have any questions or requests for our candidate services team.

Become a Monthly Donor

The easiest way to help support our work across the state is by signing up as a [monthly donor for the Democratic Party of Wisconsin](#). These funds directly allow us to hire and plan sustainably, working to defeat Ron Johnson, re-elect Gov. Evers, and save our democracy!

[Chip in any amount to join the fight!](#)



Paid for by the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Ben Wikler, Chair

Our mailing address is:

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