

# Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee: What to know about the “messy” WI GOP primary & Leah Vukmir

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Contact: Contact: Lauren Passalacqua, David Bergstein - [202-545-3567](tel:202-545-3567)

*GOP Fears Of “[Messy](#),” “[Nasty](#)” Senate Primary Become Reality*

*[“Many Republican Staffers Believe That She Is So Extreme And Heartless That She Is Dangerous.”](#)*

After Republicans’ first choice candidate [refused](#) to run, a second lower-tier candidate has formally launched her campaign in what Wisconsin Republicans are worried will be a “[messy](#)” and “[nasty](#)” primary. Here’s what to know about Leah Vukmir and the Wisconsin GOP primary:

## **WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE MESSY WI GOP PRIMARY & LEAH VUKMIR:**

- **Vukmir Isn’t The GOP’s First Choice Candidate, “Which Could Create A Messy Primary.”** “Top potential Senate candidates are turning down the opportunity to challenge vulnerable Senate Democrats...In Wisconsin, a state Trump won by less than a percentage point, leading potential challenger Rep. Sean P. Duffy (R) said he won’t run against Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D). “This is not the right time to run for Senate,” he said in a statement, pointing to his eight kids. A couple of state lawmakers, a teacher, a Marine veteran and a businessman are all considering running, which could create a messy primary.”

[Washington Post, [4/13/17](#)]

- [Lt. Governor Kleefisch](#), [Nicole Schneider](#), [Rep. Kooyenga](#) and [Rep. Grothman](#) also refused to run.
  
- **AP: “Wisconsin Republicans worry about crowded Senate primary.”** “Wisconsin Republicans are growing increasingly worried about the high number of candidates running in a primary to take on Democratic U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, fearing a repeat of the crowded 2012 race that put her in office... That year four Republicans slugged it out in an expensive and negative primary that left nominee Tommy Thompson, the former four-term governor, bruised and broke.” [Associated Press, [5/7/17](#)]
  
- **RealClear Politics: Republicans “expressed concern” about Wisconsin’s “crowded field.”** “Some [Republicans] expressed concern about...Wisconsin, where a wide array of businesspeople and state lawmakers are considering runs in what could become a crowded field with no clear frontrunner.” [RealClear Politics, [4/20/17](#)]
  
- **Politico: “Rep. Sean Duffy bowed out early, and Republicans haven’t had a clear candidate to take on Baldwin since.”** [Politico, [7/6/17](#)]
  
- **“It’s game on in the Republican contest to challenge Democratic U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin next year.”** Prominent GOP donors are finding themselves on opposite sides of the GOP primary contest. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, [8/15/17](#)]

- **Vukmir is already attacking her GOP primary opponent Kevin Nicholson over his past as a Democrat.** “Vukmir said Wednesday she has a proven conservative track record, but she doesn’t know if Nicholson does....She said she is hearing from people who ‘want a real conservative and real conservative leadership in the Senate.” She said people know her conservative past but ‘I’m not familiar with Kevin’s conservative track record at this point, other than him saying he’s a conservative.’” [Associated Press, [7/26/17](#)]
- **Vukmir: Wisconsin Republicans should elect “a consistent conservative.”** “Vukmir made her case by reviewing her career and her 25-year association with Dohnal’s Chicken Burn. She recalled how as a young mom and nurse she launched herself into grassroots activism. Now, she’s a battle-tested state senator working alongside Gov. Scott Walker. She emphasized the need to elect ‘somebody with a proven track record as a consistent conservative.’” [Journal Sentinel, [8/27/17](#)]
- **Journal Sentinel: “Deep Pocketed Republicans” Are “Lining Up On Opposite Sides” Of The GOP primary.** “Big donors are lining up behind Delafield businessman Kevin Nicholson and state Sen. Leah Vukmir of Brookfield in the race for the Republican nomination to take on Democratic U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin next year...The most prominent deep-pocketed Republicans are already on opposite sides in the race.” [Journal Sentinel, [8/17/17](#)]
- **Republican Capitol Staffer: “Many Republican Staffers Believe That She Is So Extreme And Heartless That She Is Dangerous.”** “Judy Hartig-Osanka, a Republican and former chair of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, has a warning for residents of the 5th Senate District. ‘I cannot believe that Republicans in her district, if they know what she believes in, would support her,’ Hartig-Osanka said. Also, a Republican Capitol staffer who can’t go on record said, ‘Many Republican staffers believe that she is so extreme and heartless that she is dangerous.’” [Shepherd Express, [9/29/10](#)]

- **Vukmir Has “[Ultraconservative Positions That Are Far To The Right Of The Standard GOP Platform](#),” Including Supporting Legislation Defunding Planned Parenthood And Jeopardizing Women’s Health Care.** [The Capital Times, 10/21/15; The Shephard Express, [9/29/10](#)]
  
- **Vukmir Was President Of ALEC, Serves On Their National Board Of Directors And Was Caught Receiving Legislative Instructions And Talking Points From Them.** “In one email, Christie Herrera, vice president of policy for the Florida-based Foundation for Government Accountability, a conservative think tank with a registered lobbyist, wrote to Vukmir and three other legislators from other states thanking them for sponsoring a resolution opposing the expansion of state Medicaid programs under the Affordable Care Act and coaching them on what to say. ‘Each of you will need to introduce the bill,’ Herrera wrote. ‘As such I have written opening remarks that are also attached to this e-mail. ALEC had a (ridiculous) concern that the task force debate would be ‘one-sided,’ so I have focused each of your remarks on addressing at least one pro-expansion talking point.’” [The Chippewa Herald, 4/4/14]
  - **HEADLINE: Documents Show Lobbying Group Pulling Legislators’ Strings.”** [The Post-Crescent, 4/4/14]
  
- **Vukmir Praised The Toxic GOP Health Care Bill That Would Spike Costs And Strip Coverage For Wisconsinites, While The Wealthy Get A Tax Break.** [Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, [7/25/17](#)]

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