

Republican Party of Wisconsin: Democrats defined by years of protest and disarray throughout Wisconsin

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[Madison, WI]— Headed into Tuesday's election, Wisconsin Democrats' disarray was highlighted by *The Wall Street Journal*. Democrats in Wisconsin continue to try and obstruct Governor Walker's reforms for hard-working families. Voters have rejected them so many times that, according to their own words, they lack the basic infrastructure that can tell liberal candidates, "we can help you." This article comes on the heels of three high-profile prospective Democratic candidates announcing they would not run for governor in 2018.

Read the full commentary from the Wall Street Journal below or online [here](#).

Wisconsin Democrats Are Still Paying for Their Anti-Walker Protests

The Wall Street Journal

Emily Jashinsky

March 31, 2017

Six years ago, as a bitter winter gripped the Upper Midwest, Wisconsin Democrats mobilized for a major political protest. Demonstrators packed the streets of Madison tighter than a playoff game at Lambeau Field. They descended upon the Capitol in the tens of thousands to oppose Republican Gov. Scott Walker's Act 10, which would curtail the influence of the state's powerful public-employee unions.

Some thought those snowy protests would launch a Democratic surge in Wisconsin. Instead they appear to have marked the beginning of the party's decline. Since 2011 Wisconsin Republicans have been on a winning streak.

In the state Assembly, Republicans enjoy their largest majority since 1957. Twenty of the 33 seats in the state Senate belong to the GOP, the most since 1970. Mr. Walker, who easily survived a recall election in 2012, won a new term in 2014. Last November voters rejected Democrat Russ Feingold's bid to reclaim the Senate seat he lost in 2010 to Republican Ron Johnson. Remarkably, Donald Trump won Wisconsin's 10 electoral votes—the first GOP presidential candidate to do so since Ronald Reagan in 1984.

The latest evidence of Democrats' sorry slide is the election next Tuesday for a seat on Wisconsin's Supreme Court. Only six years after their historic demonstrations against Act 10, Democrats couldn't find a single candidate willing to run against conservative Justice Annette Ziegler in her bid for another 10-year term.

A spokesman for the state's Democratic Party told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in January that "a number of people" considered opposing Justice Ziegler before ultimately deciding not to take the plunge. Considering Wisconsin's political history as an incubator of 20th-century progressivism, this development is rather stunning. "The Democratic Party has done a terrible job," Glendale Mayor Bryan Kennedy told the Journal Sentinel. "We haven't built the kind of infrastructure that says to a Supreme Court candidate, 'We can help you.'"

The trend, though, goes back to the turn of the millennium. In Supreme Court races that pit a conservative against a liberal, voters seem to prefer the conservative virtually every time. In 2000 Diane Sykes —now a federal judge, whom President Trump has floated as a candidate for the U.S. Supreme Court—beat progressive Louis Butler for a seat on Wisconsin's Supreme Court. Four years later, when Justice Sykes left for the federal bench, Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle appointed Mr. Butler to the vacancy anyway. But when voters had their say in 2008, they again rejected him in favor of conservative Michael Gableman.

Ms. Sykes's win in 2000 began an incredible run of conservative victories in competitive Supreme Court races. Today only two reliable liberal justices remain on the court of seven.

Wisconsin progressives have scrambled to explain away the conservative ascendancy. "Big business," they claim, has swayed court races with large contributions to third-party campaign organizations that promote conservatives.

But Democratic-aligned groups have spent millions on behalf of their favored court candidates. In 2011, the liberal Greater Wisconsin Committee put \$1.6 million into ads in the last two weeks of the race between conservative Justice David Prosser and liberal JoAnne Kloppenburg, more than any single pro-Prosser group spent. Mr. Prosser eked out a victory anyway, even amid the political storm raging over Gov. Walker's labor reforms.

Ms. Kloppenburg was later elected to a lower-court seat, but a year ago this April she lost another race for the Supreme Court. Conservative Justice Rebecca Bradley weathered a storm of her own, fending off brutal attacks that dredged up newspaper columns she had written 24 years earlier as a student at Marquette University. Justice Bradley prevailed 52% to 47%, solidifying conservatives' 5-2 majority.

On election night, Justice Bradley concluded her victory speech with a paraphrase from Winston Churchill : "There is nothing more exhilarating than being shot at without result." If that's the case, Wisconsin conservatives have a lot to be exhilarated about. Even more so now that the state's Democrats are so deeply demoralized that they appear to have given up on shooting altogether. Read the article online [here](#).