

The Working Families Party: Wisconsin is hiring! People-driven organizations launch major grassroots effort to shape 2018 election and race for governor

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Effective grassroots organizations coming together to build a government that works for the people of Wisconsin

MADISON — The people of Wisconsin are hiring! Two of the state's powerhouse people-driven organizations launched the Wisconsin's Choice campaign in Madison today to elevate the issues that the people of our state want to see in our next governor and elected leaders. At the press conference announcing the launch of the Wisconsin's Choice campaign, leaders outlined plans to beat the corporate lobbyists that currently run Wisconsin. The campaign is founded on the belief that the majority of Wisconsinites want to topple this rigged system and find candidates who will build a government we can believe in again.

The aim of the Wisconsin's Choice campaign is to involve hundreds of thousands of citizens in every corner of the state in determining Wisconsin's future. Activists contend that Wisconsin is ready for change and leaders who operate in their interests, not those of moneyed donors and corporations. Hundreds of residents participated in a webinar last week to start writing a job description and plan our work. Community meetings are already being planned from Kenosha to Stevens Point to Green Bay to La Crosse.

"In 2018, Wisconsin has a choice to make. Starting today, the Wisconsin's Choice campaign is beginning a search process outline an agenda that will put people before corporate interests and move our state forward again," said Marina Dimitrijevic, executive director of Wisconsin Working Families Party. "Over the last year, we've seen an incredible activist spirit all across Wisconsin.

There are those called to fight a rigged political system, those angry at the damage done by Governor Scott Walker's all-out war on schools and our public servants, and those shocked by the division sown by Donald Trump. It's going to take all of us to make change."

The first step in the Wisconsin's Choice campaign is going to the people by holding town halls in across the state, announcing that "the people of Wisconsin are hiring." At those meetings, residents will identify the issues important to working people, like raising the minimum wage, strengthening public schools, creating sustainable jobs, and fighting back against voter suppression.

From these discussions across the state, Wisconsin's Choice will create a "job description" and call on interested candidates to apply. Next, we will organize candidate forums — job interviews, if you will — that bring candidates to the people. Together, we believe we can shape the future of Wisconsin state government.

"Right now, Wisconsin is run for the benefit of a privileged few, not the many, the people," said Joel Rogers of Our Wisconsin Revolution. "Almost anywhere you look — our schools, our environment, our farms, the rest of our economy, our election process, our public administration itself — corporations rule us. We no longer rule ourselves. The process of beating up and then blowing up our democracy didn't start eight years ago, but it's certainly accelerated since. And it will kill us as a state and a community. Wisconsin's Choice is about making those stakes clear, and suggesting how we can solve, not just bemoan or try to make private profit off of, our problems."

The Wisconsin's Choice campaign will be staffed by professional grassroots organizers, communications staffers, and field support.

"As a farmer and a rural Wisconsinite I know how important it is to put the people back in charge of our government. Farmers and rural communities are struggling," Sarah Lloyd, co-chair of Our Wisconsin Revolution. "Like our urban neighbors, we see the economy slipping away from focusing on the people. The Wisconsin's Choice campaign is about bringing all Wisconsinites together - urban and rural."

Scott Walker has dismantled the public school and higher education systems. He doles out multi-billion-dollar corporate welfare checks that produce an anemic number of jobs and cost taxpayers. His union-busting hurts families and our children. The people of Wisconsin are angry and our schools, jobs, and cherished pillars of our democracy are at stake.

"Wisconsin's Choice gives us an opportunity to decide the future of our state," said Luz Sosa, community organizer with Citizen Action of Wisconsin. "We're excited to participate in creating a Wisconsin where everyone has equal opportunities, including health care for all, workers rights, and a fair chance for our state's newest residents."

In just two years, Wisconsin Working Families Party has established itself as a political player in

the state. The organization recently helped Cory Mason's successful bid to become mayor of Racine. In Milwaukee, WI Working Families Party was instrumental in electing Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson as well as creating a \$15 minimum wage for public contractual workers. The organization also invested heavily in a spring 2017 campaign that resulted in a pro-public education majority Milwaukee Board of School Directors with the election of several Wisconsin Working Families Party-endorsed candidates.

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The Working Families Party is a grassroots political organization. With chapters in Wisconsin and a dozen other states, as well as a membership that spans the nation, the Working Families Party works to advance public policies that make a difference in the lives of working people, like raising the minimum wage, stopping bad trade deals, taking on Wall Street, tackling climate change, and combating racial injustice. Working Families brings these issues to the ballot box and the halls of government at the federal, state and local levels.

Our Wisconsin Revolution is an election- and governing-focused, democratic mass-membership organization, with a member-ratified People's Platform for change in Wisconsin.