

WisDems: ICYMI: A rough week for the WI GOP

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MADISON - Wisconsin Republicans are convening this weekend for the annual state GOP convention. As they gather, here's a quick recap of how their week has been so far. **Hint: it's not been great.** From dealing with a crowded Senate primary with no clear front-runner, to [attacking each other for their party affiliation](#) and scrambling to proclaim who the "real conservative" is, we're betting there will be some animosity at the Wisconsin Dells.

Associated Press: [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.

...

With at least seven possible Republican Senate candidates making the rounds, to some the dynamic is looking eerily familiar to 2012. 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.

"Westrate [chairman of the 3rd Congressional District Republican Party] said he would feel better if there was a generally agreed-upon candidate. Instead, there are about four Republicans who are making moves to launch a campaign and at least four others being recruited or thinking about it.

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Baldwin benefited in 2012 from being unchallenged on the Democratic side as she spent months raising money and defining herself as Republicans slugged it out. She defeated Thompson by nearly 6 percentage points. She's taking the same approach now. Baldwin raised \$2.2 million in the first three months of this year and had \$2.4 million cash on hand. Johnson, at this point in 2015, had raised about \$1 million less.

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Chris Lato, who worked for Neumann's Senate campaign, said he understands the concerns some Republicans have about having a repeat of the "pretty brutal" 2012 primary. 'Just beating the crap out of everybody won't help any,' Lato said. "You have to emerge strong and united to take on Tammy Baldwin because she will be a force.'"

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [Schneider: GOP Senate primary voters will demand a real conservative](#)

"Ideological transformations are happening before our eyes. Take the 2018 Wisconsin Senate race.

...

A gaggle of Republicans already are positioning themselves for a run at Baldwin. And two of the primary competitors are new not only to politics, but to the Republican Party itself.

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Back in 2000, Kevin Nicholson served as head of the College Democrats of America, which is a fairly non-traditional start to a career in Republican politics. Nicholson, who has since become a U.S. Marine veteran and businessman, actually addressed the 2000 Democratic National Convention, promoting both legal abortion and the nomination of Vice President Al Gore. Now that he's floating his name as a possible GOP senator, Nicholson claims he no longer holds these views, and frequently mentions his life as a Democrat in his speeches.

Ironically, a group with financial ties to Nicholson's supporters recently attacked Green Bay educator and potential candidate Nicole Schneider for being insufficiently conservative. Schneider... has gotten heat for her pesky habit of taking to social media to either praise Democratic politicians or criticize

Republicans. While her skepticism over Donald Trump's candidacy certainly isn't a deal-breaker, she should be ready to explain her apparent enthusiasm for Obamacare.

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If state Sen. Leah Vukmir of Wauwatosa or state Rep. Dale Kooyenga of Brookfield enter the race, voters can choose candidates who won't have to waste time explaining their conservative credentials to primary voters. Each of those state legislators can boast a list of conservative accomplishments as long as their arm.

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While it's too early to rule out either Schneider or Nicholson, they better be ready to spend a lot of money convincing GOP voters that they now possess Republican brains."

FOX 6 Now: Crowded Field: Gov. Walker urges GOP candidates for US Senate to focus on Baldwin

"At least a half-dozen Wisconsin Republicans are looking to take on U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin next year... Three more, and the field would have as many people as the title card from 'The Brady Bunch.'

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Other Republicans have memories of 2012, when there was another tough primary. Baldwin was able to conserve her firepower for the general election, beating former Governor Tommy Thompson.

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One of the potential candidates this year, Kevin Nicholson of Waukesha County, is already facing questions about his voting record. In 2005, while living in North Carolina, Nicholson registered as a Democrat. He went on to vote in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary, when the candidates were Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton or Mike Gravel. Nicholson told FOX6 News he voted "no preference" in the Democratic primary and went on to vote for Republican John McCain that November."

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