

# Bill Kaplan: Democrats need Wisconsin Trump voters

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Trump governs by constant deception. His modus operandi includes inciting racial animus. For example, GOP House Speaker Paul Ryan called Trump's 2016 attack against a Latino American federal judge "the textbook definition of a racist comment". However, that was before Ryan became a Trump enabler and went mute. But the moral collapse of congressional Republicans doesn't mean that Trump voters are invariably racist.

The New York Times said: "The swing of Obama voters to Mr. Trump proved a decisive factor in the 2016 presidential election. Of the more than 650 counties that chose Mr. Obama twice, about a third flipped to Mr. Trump. Many were in states critical to Mr. Trump's win, like Iowa, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin." These voters are not racists. Voters told the Times "they chose Mr. Trump for the same reason they chose Mr. Obama: a deep craving for change and disgust with both political parties."

Nothing is permanent. "Voters said they still liked Mr. Obama and that they voted for Mr. Trump because they didn't want to cast a ballot for Hillary Clinton. But they were still open to voting for Democrats - if the party could come up with the right candidates. For the most part, the midterm elections were not yet on their radars." But Democrats need Wisconsin Trump voters to win in November.

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Checks and balances are necessary to stop the erosion of democratic norms and hard-fought gains by regular folks. Both Trump and Walker are going backwards,

while regular folks want to go forward toward economic security. A Trump voter who had previously supported Obama said Trump was “not there for the poor and the middle class” (Times). Same for Walker, with an increase in the Wisconsin poverty rate to 10.8 percent and still “short of the 250,000 new jobs ... promised in his first four years” (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel). Trump and Walker are on the same page, and regular folks who voted for them are getting shafted.

Rural Wisconsinites in counties that voted for Trump and Walker stood to lose their health coverage if the Affordable Care Act had been repealed. Worse, Walker’s refusal to expand Medicaid has meant that rural Wisconsinites missed out on health quality improvements (Times). Thirty-three states have used fiscal common sense and taken federal funding to expand Medicaid. Will Wisconsin be the last holdout?

Same for SNAP (food stamps). Trump, Walker and House Republicans are trying to fool voters that cuts and program changes are a “poverty-fighting system” (Speaker Ryan). No, their idea is to (racially) stigmatize the program as “welfare”. However, the Washington Post reported that the “changes to food stamps could especially sting rural Trump supporters” who depend on the program to buy groceries.

Finally, the escalating Trump trade war could devastate Wisconsin. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce said 800,800 Wisconsin jobs supported by trade and state exports of over \$1 billion are threatened by retaliatory tariffs. Trump says: “It’s going to all work out”. Walker muffled. Time for Wisconsin Trump voters to vote Democratic.

— Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C. for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 - 2009.