

Evers campaign: Delivers keynote address at DPW convention

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MILWAUKEE — Gov. Tony Evers will today deliver the keynote address at the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's 2019 state convention. Below are Gov. Evers' remarks as prepared for delivery:

Good evening, Democrats!

Holy mackerel. Well, I guess it's about time we had a keynote speaker at convention who's a Democratic governor from Wisconsin.

Before I get started tonight, I just wanted to extend a few thank yous:

Potawatomi Tribal Nation and the staff here at the hotel & casino for hosting us this weekend—everyone please give a round of applause for these folks and thank them every chance you get.

Martha, you were with us every step during the campaign, spreading the word, doing everything possible to lead us to victory.

Our senator, Senator Tammy Baldwin, is also here tonight—thanks, Tammy, for fighting for us in Washington, D.C.

Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Chris Abele are also here—thanks for hosting us here in Milwaukee tonight. And we look forward to the big DNC gig in 2020!

We heard from Congresswoman Gwen Moore earlier—folks, she's a titan in Washington. And she's been singing about sending Scott Walker packing and up

until recently, she was the only person who'd ever beaten Scott Walker. Well, Gwen...now there are two of us.

Finally, everybody give another round of applause for my pal, Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes!

Mandela and I are coming up here on our first anniversary. We went on our first blind date on August 15th. We've been nearly inseparable since breakfast that morning before we set off on a unity tour across our state. And the good thing is, Mandela brings down our average age about twenty years, so, between the two of us, we're in our late 40s. Which is great. I haven't been this young in 20 years.

Mandela and I like to say we're a dynamic duo. It's like we have our own sitcom—he's got an Instagram story of himself eating pizza and I'm just trying to figure out how a person is supposed to sell their car when they're the governor of a state. I can't just put it on Craigslist or park it out in front of the house with a "For Sale" sign in the window. So, I guess the long and short of it is, if you know anyone who's looking to buy a car, I'm your guy.

Anyway, the bottom line is that Mandela and I make a great team. But a lot of people said during the campaign that we were too Wisconsin Nice—a lot of folks even called us, especially me, boring. And you know what we said? To hell with that.

There's nothing boring about protecting the Affordable Care Act and the 2.4 million Wisconsinites who have pre-existing conditions.

There's nothing boring about filling those Scott-holes and fixing the damn roads.

There's nothing boring about paying people a livable wage and building an economy that works for all of us.

There's nothing boring about fighting for our kids so that every kid, regardless of their zip code, has access to a high-quality, public education from kindergarten through 20.

There's nothing boring about making sure that women in Wisconsin get to make their own healthcare decisions.

There's nothing boring about believing science exists and telling everyone that climate change is real.

And here I am tonight standing before you as governor of the great state of Wisconsin with one of the most powerful veto pens in the country, so to them I say: Who's boring now?

In all seriousness, here's the deal, folks: Mandela and I couldn't have done this without your help. 30,000 votes, not quite a landslide, but close. That's all that separated us from four more years of the same old song and dance.

Occasionally, people will ask why we were successful this past November. And let me tell you: if sweeping five statewide offices doesn't tell you how important this Party is, how important our field program is, and how important all of you are, I don't know what does. But I also want to mention two other critical features of our campaign that I believe were essential to our success.

The first thing is that we had a robust and spirited primary.

Some of you might recall a guy who asked for your votes in a tough primary with, oh, a handful or 20 other candidates. We had spirited debate and dialogue, and sometimes we even disagreed, and maybe you voted for me in the primary or maybe you didn't, but at the end of the day, I was a better candidate because we had a field of great Democrats running for the nomination. I was more thoughtful, better prepared, and Democrats across our state were more energized because of that primary.

Then, once the primary was over—and folks, this part is key—we put the primary behind us, and everyone worked together to make sure we had Democratic victories up and down the ticket this past November.

And the second element of our campaign that I think was essential is that we focused on the issues.

We decided we weren't going to get down into the mud with Republicans—we weren't going to spend our time attacking personal beliefs or character. We made a decision not to be consumed by the things we were fighting against or distracted by the things that divide us. We made a decision to spend our time talking about the

things that were at stake about the things that unite us and the things we were fighting for.

So, we built our campaign on the issues: healthcare, roads, and education. And everywhere we went, we talked about healthcare, roads, and education. And there were some people who thought it was annoying that we didn't talk about anything other than healthcare, roads, and education.

But that's what we did. That was our message. And, folks, it worked.

And I think these are two lessons we have to take with us going into 2020 as we head into an important Supreme Court race and a presidential election.

First, we shouldn't be afraid to have a spirited primary so long as, when all is said and done, we remember we're all on the same team. And second, our message has to be about the issues—it cannot be solely about the things we're fighting against, it has to be about what we're fighting for.

We're going to have spirited and robust primaries next year. And that's important. That means we have more folks out there talking to different circles about the issues we care about and the values we share. But equally important is that we don't let a primary that inspires dialogue and debate devolve into divisiveness. And we have to be able to disagree without being disagreeable. Because once those primaries are over, we have to work together to win.

And that means that even when Republicans want to get in the mud, when they disparage people who are different, when they want to wage war of ideology, we aren't going to let them bait us. Republicans' words and actions speak for themselves. So, quite frankly, they don't need any help from us. That's why we have to focus our time, our energy, and our message on the issues.

I think if we remember these two takeaways from 2018, November 2020 is going to be a year full of successes for Democrats in Wisconsin.

I hear rumors all the time about Scott Walker running again or what office Ron Johnson is running for, and I'll tell you something—if we can do these things, I don't care which office they're running for, we're going to work hard and send them packing.



So, enjoy this weekend, Democrats, and then let's get to work!

Thank you!