

One Wisconsin Institute: Right-wing supporters of Dan Kelly go to court to tip electoral scales in his favor

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Contact:

Mike Browne, Deputy Director

mike@OneWisconsinInstitute.org

[\(608\) 444-3483](tel:6084443483)

MADISON, Wis. — Right-wing supporters of Dan Kelly are going to court to try to force the state Elections Commission to purge registered Wisconsinites from poll lists, a tactic utilized around the country by conservatives seeking to manipulate the rules on voting to give themselves an advantage. The suit by the right-wing Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL), whose board members have donated thousands of dollars to Kelly's campaign, threatens the registration status of over 230,000 registered Wisconsin voters in advance of the election for Wisconsin Supreme Court.

"There is no law to which the right-wing won't go to rig the rules to try to get the election result they want," said One Wisconsin Institute Executive Director Analiese Eicher. "They think fewer voters showing up in Spring 2020 will help them elect Dan Kelly and they know what they're doing will result in legal, registered voters erroneously getting thrown off poll lists."

After a voter list maintenance program incorrectly triggered the removal of tens of thousands of Wisconsin voters from the rolls in 2017, the Wisconsin Elections Commission extended the period for voters to either update their registrations to reflect a new address or notify the commission that they have not moved. The lawsuit brought by WILL, on behalf of plaintiffs who have donated thousands to right-wing candidates and causes, would force the Elections Commission to instead

purge voters within 30 days, prior to the Spring 2020 elections.

Kelly's connections to WILL make the effort to tip the electoral scales in his favor even more unseemly. Members of the Board of Directors of WILL [donated thousands of dollars to the campaign of State Supreme Court Justice Dan Kelly](#) when he was deciding a controversial case in their favor. Kelly also served as a member of a committee advising WILL on litigation strategy and worked for a right-wing foundation that has provided over \$1 million in funding for WILL.

Eicher noted this is not the first right-wing scheme intended to try to help Kelly's electoral prospects. As part of their post 2018 election sore loser session Republicans tried, but failed, to move the date of Wisconsin's 2020 presidential primary preference from April, when it would occur along with elections for local offices and Kelly's seat on the state Supreme Court, to March.

One Wisconsin Institute was the lead plaintiff in a successful federal lawsuit [striking down numerous Republican-passed laws on voting](#) including racially motivated restrictions on early voting and other measures intended to make voting harder and more complicated.

She concluded by calling on Kelly to denounce the tactics of his allies. "Dan Kelly says he respects the constitution, now it's time for him to show it. Wisconsinites have a state constitutional right to vote and Dan Kelly needs to demand his right-wing allies to stop their lawsuits and schemes to undermine that right."