

‘UpFront’: Kelly says state Supreme Court’s job is to apply the law as it exists

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Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Daniel Kelly said it will be a challenge to break through the “noise” of the 2020 election cycle, but he hopes to do it by talking to voters “one-on-one.”

Kelly, running for his first full 10-year term since being appointed by Scott Walker in 2016, appeared Sunday on “UpFront,” produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

Kelly said he wasn’t sure what to expect in his first-ever campaign.

“And what I’ve found is, it is a delight,” he said.

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Kelly, considered part of the court’s conservative wing, said he has been going all over the state talking about the role of the judiciary.

“Our job is to apply the law as it exists, not as we might wish it to be, but as it actually exists,” he said.

“I know my opponents have been talking about the issues they would champion on the court, the laws they like, the laws they don’t like. I’m deeply concerned about that, because that simply has nothing to do with the role of the court,” Kelly said.

“We put all that aside and we just take the law as it comes, as the people of Wisconsin have asked it to be created. They say to us ‘Please just apply it,’” he said.

Kelly will face Dane County Circuit Judge Jill Karofsky and Marquette University Law

School Professor Ed Fallone in the February primary. The two top candidates will then move on to the spring general election in April, which falls on the same day as the state's presidential preference primary.

Also on the program, researcher Lindsay Emer discussed a new study from UWM's Joseph Zilber School of Public Health that links childhood lead exposure to gun violence later in life.

"As children's average blood lead level went up, their risk for either perpetration or victimization went up as well," said Emer, who was the study's primary author.

The study done in Milwaukee spanned decades and involved tens of thousands of subjects.

"We know that childhood lead exposure affects a child's brain in a way that it impairs future decision making and increases impulsivity, which are both conducive to criminal behavior," she said.

In another segment, WisPolitics.com Editor JR Ross discussed the political upsides and downsides for both Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and legislative Republicans, who are involved in a showdown over Evers' call for a special session to consider legislation related to gun violence.

Republicans oppose universal background checks and extreme risk protection order legislation, both of which Evers has proposed.

See more from the program: <https://www.wisn.com/article/upfront-recap-wisconsin-supreme-court-justice-says-justices-should-apply-law-as-it-exists/29598266>