STATE AFFAIRS
WISPOLITICS
Wisconsin's Premier Political News Service

Kelly, Karofsky to advance to April general election in state Supreme Court race

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 19, 2020

Conservative Justice Daniel Kelly and liberal Dane County Judge Jill Karofsky will advance to the April 7 general election to decide a 10-year term on the state's highest court after Tuesday's primary.

With all but two precincts in as of early this morning, Kelly was at 50.1 percent, while Karofsky was at 37.2 percent.

Marquette University Law School Prof. Ed Fallone was a distant third at 12.7 percent.

Kelly raised more than $987,000 for his campaign through Feb. 3, giving him a significant financial edge on his rivals. Karofsky was a distant second for fundraising with $413,957.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. Get the app or access via desktop.

Kelly's edge allowed him to go up on TV and radio first, and he reported spending more than $250,000 on ads through earlier this month. Karofsky's campaign she said spent $160,000 on TV.

Kelly, appointed by Scott Walker, hailed the results as proof that "that Wisconsinites are passionate about preserving their constitution and upholding the rule of law on their Supreme Court."

Karofsky has accused Kelly of ruling in favor of special interests and conservatives every time he's had the opportunity. Kelly fired back at a Jan. 30 debate it was slander and demanded an apology.

But Karofsky didn't back down then and took another shot at Kelly after Tuesday's results.

"It feels like corruption when you have someone on the Supreme Court who always rules for the right-wing special interests, when you have someone on the Supreme Court who says I don't rule in favor of my politics, but he stands in front of Trump signs," Karofsky said. "He cradles AR-15s, he runs his campaign out of the state GOP headquarters, but he says my politics don't come into this. People don't believe that."

Fallone issued a statement backing Karofsky and urging voters to defeat Kelly, saying the current justice has an agenda that includes representing "the rich and the politically powerful." He also knocked Kelly for past writings comparing affirmative action to slavery and that same-sex marriage would rob the institution of marriage of all meaning.

"Dan Kelly's agenda is to overturn any prior precedent that he personally disagrees with, and to leave us with Dan Kelly's Constitution, where our rights are defined according to Dan Kelly's morality. This cannot stand," Fallone said.