

Voces de la Frontera Action: Cheers Wisconsin election results

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin—The right wing’s strategy of suppressing votes in Wisconsin backfired badly.

Voces de la Frontera Action and its many allies turned the tables on Republicans and right-wingers who thought that forcing a rushed and dangerous election would bring victory to their Trump-endorsed Supreme Court candidate. Instead, angry voters turned out to support a statewide sweep of progressive pro-immigrant candidates.

Jill Karofsky, a progressive endorsed by Voces de la Frontera Action, defeated the right’s candidate, incumbent Daniel Kelly, who was appointed by former Gov. Scott Walker.

Karofsky’s victory, of nationwide importance, will weaken the conservative majority on the state Supreme Court from its current 5-2 to 4-3.

Voces de la Frontera Action’s person-to-person organizing also had a huge impact in electing progressive Latinx and people of color candidates in Racine, Milwaukee, West Allis and Fitchburg.

Volunteers and organizers for Voces de la Frontera Action, the advocacy arm of Voces de la Frontera, made more than 22,000 phone calls to Latinx voters statewide and helped more than 2,500 Latinx voters obtain and submit absentee ballots to protect the safety of voters and poll workers.

“Voces de la Frontera Action built a powerful grassroots movement,” said Fabi Maldonado, Political Director. “We delivered over 2,700 votes from Latinx voters. We look to forward to the fall where we will vote Trump out of office.”

All but one of Voces de la Frontera's endorsed candidates won. The endorsed candidate Chris Larson lost narrowly his bid for Milwaukee County Executive.

A sharp focus for Voces de la Frontera Action was winning in local races that represented breakthroughs for representation for Latinx, LGBTQ and Filipinos to local office: Edwin Santiago Jr., the first Puerto Rican elected to Racine's City Council; JoCasta Zamarripa, the first open LGBTQ *and* first Latina on the Milwaukee Common Council; Angelito Tenorio, the first Filipino to the West Allis City Council; and Joe Maldonado, the first Latinx to Fitchburg's City Council.

Tearman Spencer, also endorsed, will be the new Milwaukee City Attorney. He is a strong supporter of immigrant rights and the first person of color to be the city's top legal officer. This was a major victory for Voces de la Frontera Action coming on the heels of a policy victory in the City of Milwaukee to ensure no collaboration between the Milwaukee Police Department and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Incumbent City Attorney Langley, defeated by Spencer, had opposed this policy and had historically run on an anti-sanctuary platform.

Other endorsed progressive winners are: Marina Dimitrijevic to the Milwaukee Common Council and Ryan Clancy as Milwaukee County Supervisor, both Voces de la Frontera members with long and accomplished histories in the immigrant rights struggle; Aycha Sawa as Milwaukee City Comptroller; and Rebecca Kiefer and Brett Blomme as Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judges.

The Milwaukee Public Schools funding referendum won by a huge margin. The additional funds are critical for public school students, staff and the wider community. Voces de la Frontera Action youth actively canvassed prior to the emergency order, phone-banked, and engaged their friends and family through the "Voceros for the Vote" social network to support the referendum.

Voces de la Frontera Action and its youth group were also instrumental in a narrow referendum win for the Racine Unified School District, which will help public schools financially over the next 30 years.

This progressive sweep in local and statewide races, in the face of a historic assault on voter rights during a pandemic, is a testament to the will of Wisconsinites to continue to build momentum and political power going into November's election.

Voces de la Frontera Action is part of a national network of immigrant rights organizations advancing the Latinx and immigrant vote.

“Tonight’s election results show that Wisconsinites want a change, especially at the local level,” said Grecia Lima, Political Director at Washington, D.C.-based Community Change Action. “Progressive candidates won up and down the ticket and voters were heard. Last week’s action by Republicans unnecessarily put millions of Wisconsinites in danger.

“It’s unacceptable. We need fair elections that keep everyone safe,” she continued. “We need automatic voter registration and a mail-in ballot for all voters.

“The Presidential election is rapidly approaching and our voters—pro-immigrant, progressive voters, black and brown voters—are ready to take the country in a new direction. We will continue our efforts with our partners nationally to engage and empower our community in November.”

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