

# Wisdeems: Campaigns in Wisconsin adjust to COVID-19 conditions as they prep for November

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**(WISCONSIN)** — Shortly before the state-wide April election, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin converted their entire field team into a digital operation that, after scoring a major victory against a Trump-backed candidate, has proven to be a winning model for campaigning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the DPW and the Biden for Wisconsin team are running a Coordinated Campaign that will continue to deliver Democratic victories up and down the ticket. Meanwhile, Wisconsin Republicans continue to ignore the severity of COVID-19 as they hold in-person conventions, knock on the doors of potentially at risk individuals, and undermine the Governor's ability to keep Wisconsinites safe. Read more about how DPW is prioritizing safety and democracy above all else, below.

## **KEY POINTS BELOW:**

[The Cap Times: Campaigns in Wisconsin adjust to COVID-19 conditions as they prep for November](#)

- Democrats, though, reiterated their commitment to reaching people virtually, rather than engaging in traditional door-to-door and in-person outreach efforts.
- Biden's Wisconsin state director Danielle Melfi said residents "want to have their health and safety be respected."
- Though unique from others, this cycle, Melfi said, is similar in the sense that the priority remains the same: "always meeting voters where they are."
- "Folks are home, folks are on their phones, folks are online, so how are we making sure we're safely connecting with voters on the issues that matter most to them?" she said.

- One of the campaign's most recent efforts was an organizing event last week hosted by Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes which touted the VP's clean energy and sustainable infrastructure plans and kicked off a weekend of phone calls.
- While that's something that traditionally would have occurred in-person, Melfi said "it still had the effect of connecting folks all across the state on the issues that matter most to them."
- The April 7 election — the state's first during the age of COVID-19 — produced a big win for Democrats.
- Then, liberal Wisconsin Supreme Court candidate Jill Karofsky toppled conservative Justice Daniel Kelly to win a full 10-year term on the bench.
- Democratic Party Trump Rapid Response spokesman Philip Shulman pointed to the party's digital efforts and expanded voter protection efforts that sought to deal with problems on the fly while fielding hundreds of requests from voters on April 7.
- The party had converted its field team to a digital one weeks before the spring election, he noted.
- "April was sort of the first big test: Can you pull this off, can you do this? And with what little time we had, we did so with great success," he added. "So looking at how much time we're going to have this time around, I think it's clear that we're going to be able to reach more folks, we're going to be able to educate them the way we need to and ultimately we'll be able to turn out a lot of voters to vote absentee and to make sure their ballots are being cast."
- Among Democrats, the party Friday released a memo noting "the early investment" it made in communities across Wisconsin dating back to the beginning of 2017, when members of the field team began forming neighborhood field teams, or local groups of volunteers to organize in their communities.
- That, the memo said, contributed to statewide wins in 2018 by Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, among others, as well as in April 2020.
- Describing the Biden campaign and DPW's relationship as an "incredibly close partnership," Melfi noted the party has had organizers on the ground for multiple elections.
- "So we're really excited to be building off of the investment in the coordinated campaign and in the organizing infrastructure so we all start running in one direction, which we have been since I've been on the ground," she said.
- Melfi, who previously served as Democratic U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin's political engagement chief in her successful 2018 re-election bid, began in her

role last month.

- Joining her on the ground are former Baldwin campaign manager Scott Spector, now a senior adviser for Biden, as well as Garren Randolph, former political director for Gov. Tony Evers' 2018 campaign and current deputy state director, and Shirley Ellis, an adviser to U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore. She'll work as a strategic adviser for the Biden campaign following the DNC this August.
- Stressing the need to make investments in Milwaukee as well as the western and northern parts of the state, Melfi said officials are "not taking anything for granted."
- "We have folks with the experience on the team to win Wisconsin," she said. "And we know that we need to connect with folks all across the state."
- The party also raised \$10 million in the second quarter of the year, split between its federal and state accounts, as officials seek to prevent legislative Republicans who control the Assembly and Senate from securing a veto-proof majority. At the top of the ticket, latest Marquette University Law School Poll, from mid-June, found Biden leading Trump 49% to 41%.

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