

# DGA: Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers is last line of defense against republicans' assault on voting rights

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Ben Wikler: "Gov. Tony Evers (D-WI) will likely be the last line of defense against Republicans' assault on democracy in Wisconsin and, with it, America."

Wisconsin Democratic Party Chair Ben Wikler penned an [op-ed](#) for Crooked Media this week, explaining how Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers is the last line of defense against Republicans trying to strip Wisconsinites of their right to vote. Republicans across the country are attempting to gut voting rights – the Brennan Center estimates Republicans have introduced [253 bills to strip voting access in 43 states](#), including [10 in Wisconsin](#).

Under the guise of "[election integrity](#)," Republicans in the WI legislature have introduced a number of ridiculous proposals, including drowning voters in paperwork when they apply for an absentee ballot, barring staff at assisted living sites from reminding residents of an upcoming election, imposing photo ID requirements, restricting drop boxes to one per county no matter the county's size, and more.

The real goal of these bills is to continue servicing the "Big Lie" that the 2020 election was "rigged," to disenfranchise Black and brown voters, and to limit voter turnout. Republicans even [admitted their motives were purely partisan in open court](#) last week – when more people vote, Democrats tend to win.

Wikler says, "Gov. Tony Evers (D-WI) will likely be the last line of defense against Republicans' assault on democracy in Wisconsin and, with it, America."

We've been singing this song for years – from shoring up the Affordable Care Act to blocking attempts to gut public education funding and protecting the right to vote, Democratic governors have been the last line of defense against Republicans' dangerous agenda items. And when 36 gubernatorial seats are up in 2022 – let's not forget the “blue wall” of Democratic governors in key swing states paved the way for President Biden's historic win and ensured a fair and complete count in the key states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Nevada, and Pennsylvania.

Read Wikler's op-ed below.

Crooked: [Democracy's Last Line of Defense](#)

When Joe Biden took the oath of office six weeks ago, I imagine many Democrats in other states were excited to stop worrying about Wisconsin and Arizona for a few years.

I have bad news.

Last week, the Supreme Court heard a case that is ostensibly about specific changes to Arizona's voting laws. In practice, however, experts fear that the Court's 6-3 conservative majority will use it as a vehicle to gut what remains of the Voting Rights Act.

H.R.1., the urgently-needed For The People Act, would repair the damage—but faces challenging prospects. If the Court strikes and H.R. 1 doesn't pass, Gov. Tony Evers (D-WI) will likely be the last line of defense against Republicans' assault on democracy in Wisconsin and, with it, America.

[...]

Not coincidentally, this hearing comes as Republican legislators work feverishly to make voting harder, especially for voters who are Black and brown, young, low-income, or have disabilities. Nationally, they have already introduced 253 measures to restrict voting access in 43 states. Just last week, Wisconsin Republicans proposed 10 separate bills to restrict voting. Among them: making it a felony for staff at assisted living facilities to remind residents to vote, preventing cities and towns from receiving grants to facilitate election administration, and limiting absentee-ballot drop boxes to one location per city, village, or town, no matter its size. By contrast, Evers' budget includes a variety of provisions, including expanded

early voting and automatic voter registration, to make voting easier for everyone—regardless of political party.

[...]

While Wisconsin is hardly alone in facing a GOP threat to our fundamental voting rights, the stakes here are unique.

The grim reality is that there are many states, including the Electoral College swing states of Arizona and Georgia, where Republicans control both houses of the state legislature and the Governor's office. Last week, the House of Representatives passed H.R.1, which would safeguard voting rights around the country. But that bill appears to face an uphill battle in the Senate, where Democrats might have to find 50 Senators willing to vote to reform or eliminate the filibuster. If H.R.1 stalls, new voter suppression bills will almost certainly become law in states where Republicans hold trifectas.

By contrast, there are Democratic governors in the three so-called "blue wall" states: Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. And of those states, Wisconsin had the closest margins in both the 2018 gubernatorial and 2020 presidential elections. In fact, there's only one state that's had less than 1% margins in four of the last six presidential elections: Wisconsin.

Governors ready to block Republican voter suppression are critical to maintaining the blue wall in the Midwest and the pathway to Democratic presidential victories.

But let's be very clear: this isn't just about Democrats. It's about democracy. Our system of government only works if voters get to pick their representatives—not the other way around.

We've seen what happens when Republicans sweep the Assembly, Senate, and Governor's offices and take total control of a state like Wisconsin. Between 2011 and 2018, Scott Walker and his allies in the legislature used their power to change the rules and tilt their playing field to their own advantage.

[...]

We still live with the consequences of Wisconsin Republicans' war on free and fair elections today. In the 2016 presidential election, thanks in part to new voter ID laws, Wisconsin turned red for the first time since 1984, helping deliver the White

House to Donald Trump. Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI) even admitted that was the point of the restrictions. And because of the 2011 gerrymandering, Republicans have near-supermajorities in the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate, even though our state is among the most perfectly purple in the nation.

Across lines of race, class, geography, and even political party, we should all be able to agree that Wisconsin and our country are strongest when our government reflects voters' wishes. For the last two years, Evers has been a bulwark against the further erosion of that core principle. Today, Wisconsin Republicans are more zealous than ever in their march against democracy, and with the Arizona case now under review, the Supreme Court seems poised to further clear the path.

The conclusion is simple: If we believe in a representative government of, by, and for the people, we must make it our mission to re-elect Evers and his fellow midwestern Democrats in 2022.

Ben Wikler is chairman of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin