

Working Families Party: 2021 Endorsements Highlight Progressive Activists-Turned Candidates

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Contact: Madeline Stocker, 860.808.7857, mstocker@workingfamilies.org

WISCONSIN – Today the Working Families Party announced its first round of endorsements for the 2021 election cycle. The grassroots political group's new endorsements include activist women of color and first-time candidates like Attorney Angela Cunningham for Kenosha County Circuit Court Judge, Auntavia Jackson for Racine Unified School District, Yannette Figueroa Cole for Madison Common Council and Dana Kelley for Milwaukee Public School Board, who are running on bold platforms of racial and economic justice.

The WI WFP is also supporting progressive candidates across the state, including **Melissa Winker** for State Senate (SD13), **Jael Currie** and **Nikki Conklin** for Madison Common Council, **Alder Natalia Taft** for Racine City Council, **Karl Jaeger** for State Assembly (AD89), **Simrnjit Seerha** and **Matthew Thompson** for Middleton Cross Plains Area School District, **Henry Leonard** for Milwaukee Public School Board, and **Todd Price** for Kenosha Unified School District.

“Wisconsin families deserve lawmakers who are mission-driven in the fight to bring jobs, care and recovery to every corner of our state,” said Priscilla Bort, organizer for the Wisconsin Working Families Party. “These candidates are long-time leaders in communities that look like them, and they’re championing bold, progressive solutions to the many crises hitting Wisconsin’s working families. The WI WFP is proud to support them to Election Day and beyond.”

Attorney Angela Cunningham is an outspoken advocate for community safety,

restorative justice, and eliminating racial bias in the Kenosha court system who is running to be the first Black woman to serve in Kenosha County Court. From nonprofit board membership, to grassroots organizing, and tutoring elementary students, she has a long history of using her personal and professional expertise to serve her community.

Auntavia Jackson is a leading advocate for Racine youth who currently serves as the Director of SE WI Expansion for Public Allies MKE and is a board member for Big Brother Big Sisters and the Institute for Urban Education. A Racine Unified alumni and a mother to two children in the district, Auntavia would be the first person of color elected to the Racine Unified School Board.

Yanette Figueroa Cole is a grassroots organizer with a long record of service to communities across Madison. Her campaign centers on health and wellness for District 10's underserved communities, with a focus on building a city budget that invests in Madison's working families, not corporations. She was born in Puerto Rico and spent the last three decades living in Madison, during which she served as the president of Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association and a board member of Friends of the State Street Family, an organization that works to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Dane County.

Dana Kelley is a mother, Reverend and lead organizer with Citizen Action's North Side Rising. Through working with public school families across Milwaukee's North Side, Kelley saw first-hand the myriad issues disproportionately affecting students of color. Her transformative platform for MPS includes funding programs to help Black students thrive, fighting privatization, and building a Green New Deal for Milwaukee's public schools.

"I am proud and honored to be endorsed by the Working Families Party," said Cunningham. "I believe in the WFP's mission to bring people together across differences to create a justice system that works for all of us. Together, we can fight for a Kenosha County Court system that respects the dignity of communities of color, working families, and immigrants, and one that righteously delivers justice for survivors."

"The Wisconsin Working Families Party has long been a voice for public school teachers and families across the state, and I am honored to join their ranks," said Auntavia Jackson. "I look forward to working with the WFP to make sure every single one of our children — white, Black, brown, native and newcomer — are at the

center of every single decision the district makes, no exceptions.”

“As an advocate for people experiencing homelessness, I see how much basic things like affordable housing and mental health services are needed, not just in my district but throughout Wisconsin,” said Yanette Figueroa Cole. “I am so happy to join WI WFP’s fight for these issues and more.”

“Milwaukee Public Schools, and schools throughout Wisconsin, are ready for a Green New Deal and an environment where Black and brown students and educators are given the tools they need to succeed,” said Dana Kelley. “I am proud to be endorsed and work alongside the Wisconsin Working Families Party in the fight for public schools.”

The Working Families Party is a grassroots political party that recruits, trains, and elects the next generation of progressive leaders to office. The endorsements come on the heels of the massive volunteer-driven get out the vote effort, where dozens of WFP members and activists came together from across the state to help elect President Joe Biden. Over the course of three months, the WI WFP collected 95,000 commitments to vote from voters across the state — nearly quadruple Trump’s margin of victory in Wisconsin for 2016, and helped protect Gov. Evers’ veto in the state legislature.

Previously, the Party [helped elect](#) Gov. Tony Evers and WFP Board Member and Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, and [swept the MPS](#) elections — a victory that served as a mid-point for an incredible progressive [winning streak](#) for the WFP in local elections across America. The WI WFP then went on to [pass the MPS referendum](#) and [win key seats](#) in the April election.