

Democratic Governors Association: Kevin Nicholson feuds with party leadership, fanning flames of Wisconsin GOP civil war

Posted on Wednesday, Jan 26, 2022

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Today, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel [reported](#) that Kevin Nicholson is on a crash course with his own party after attacking the state Republican Party leader in front of a crowd.

Nicholson **“made clear on Saturday he’s planning to run an insurgent campaign”** at a Manitowoc County Republican event — slamming the GOP as a “broken machine” and threatening to oust the party leader if elected.

“At least four Republican lawmakers were standing in the room as Nicholson criticized them as being ‘bought and paid for’ by Kleefisch,” the Journal Sentinel reported.

The attacks came amidst a brewing GOP civil war involving some of Wisconsin’s most prominent Republicans. Last week, Nicholson traded insults with Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos when Vos [demanded](#) Nicholson not run against Kleefisch.

Even top Republican donors are torn on which side to take. Dick Uihlein [recently urged](#) Nicholson to run, even after his wife, Liz Uihlein, [maxed out](#) in donations to Kleefisch.

“Kevin Nicholson hasn’t entered the race yet, and he’s already imploding the Wisconsin GOP,” said DGA Senior Communications Advisor Christina

Amestoy. **“With party leadership and big donors torn on who to back, the Republican primary for governor will be a divisive race — and whoever secures the nomination will struggle to consolidate support against a respected incumbent in Gov. Tony Evers.”**

Read key excerpts from the article below:

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [Kevin Nicholson isn't yet in the GOP race for governor, but he's already shaking up the Republican field](#)

Kevin Nicholson, an all but declared GOP candidate for governor, made clear on Saturday he's planning to run an insurgent campaign after he admonished the leader of the state Republican Party in front of a Manitowoc County crowd and promised to push him out of his job.

In brief video footage of a Manitowoc County Republican Caucus event, Nicholson blasted what he called the “machine” of Wisconsin Republican politics that he claimed was not working to win elections but instead to provide jobs for politicians.

“You represent a broken machine — you're part of it,” Nicholson told Republican Party of Wisconsin chairman Paul Farrow in front of the caucus meeting crowd. “It has lost 11 out of 12 races. It will lose the next one if you're allowed to get your way.”

Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu, who attended the event, said the filmed exchange took place after Nicholson said the state party planned to force candidates who do not receive party endorsements from their primary race.

[...]

The Saturday episode followed clashes in recent days between Nicholson and Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, foreshadowing an anti-establishment campaign that Nicholson is likely to run against former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch in the GOP primary.

[...]

Nicholson said if he wins, “it all changes overnight.”

“Paul Farrow is not going to be the party chair. And I'll swear by it,” Nicholson told

the crowd.

At least four Republican lawmakers were standing in the room as Nicholson criticized them as being “bought and paid for” by Kleefisch, referring to campaign donations made by a political action committee Kleefisch established in 2020 for legislative candidates.

[...]

Nicholson, a Waukesha County business owner and Marine veteran, has tussled with longtime elected Republicans before. During his 2018 U.S. Senate campaign, he also tussled with Farrow’s mother, former Lt. Gov. Margaret Farrow, during a Republican event in 2018.

[...]

The dustup in Manitowoc County came two days before Republican megadonor Richard Uihlein released a statement suggesting he would spend as much as necessary to elect Nicholson if he chooses to run for governor.

[...]

Meanwhile, Liz Uihlein, Richard Uihlein’s wife, has spent \$220,000 on behalf of Kleefisch.