

Evers Campaign: Gov. Evers stands as a Bulwark for democracy

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MADISON, Wis. — In case you missed it, the Guardian [highlighted](#) how “the future of American democracy may hinge on what happens in contests like the gubernatorial race in Wisconsin, a critical battleground state.”

As Wisconsin Republicans [launch baseless attacks on democracy](#) and [attempt to dissolve a bipartisan elections commission that they created](#), Governor Tony Evers told the Guardian that “giving the Republicans the opportunity to essentially depress the vote is not in the cards.”

Gov. Evers has stood as a “[sea wall for fair elections](#)” because he is committed to making sure every eligible voter is able to participate in the democratic process and ensuring that Wisconsin’s elections remain fair, secure, and accurate.

Read more about how Gov. Evers is standing as a bulwark for democracy below.

The Guardian: [Letting Republicans depress the vote is ‘not in the cards’: a US governor on a race that may shape democracy](#)

Wisconsin’s governor, Tony Evers, is not exactly known as a hotheaded partisan warrior – the softspoken Democrat enjoys polka, the card game Euchre, and a daily McDonald’s Egg McMuffin. But it struck a nerve this week when he heard Robin Vos, the powerful speaker of the Wisconsin state assembly, claim there was widespread voter fraud in 2020.

“He’s one of the smartest people I’ve ever met but that was about the dumbest thing he’s ever said,” Evers told the Guardian on Thursday.

This fall, the future of American democracy may hinge on what happens in contests

like the gubernatorial race in Wisconsin, a critical battleground state. Evers, who was narrowly elected in 2018, is seeking a second term, and Republicans who control the state legislature have been eager to enact new voting restrictions, and more recently, have fractured in a push to illegally “decertify” Joe Biden’s victory in the state.

A similar dynamic is playing out in Michigan and Pennsylvania, also presidential swing states, where Democrats are also seeking to hold on to governorships and where Republican-led legislatures are attacking voting rights.

Part of Evers’ re-election campaign has been casting himself as a sort of last line of defense for democracy. Rebecca Kleefisch, who is leading the Republican field for governor, refuses to say whether Biden won the election. Tim Rathmun, another Republican candidate, is pushing for decertification. Kevin Nicholson, another GOP candidate, has acknowledged Biden’s victory, but said the election was “messed up”, though multiple reviews have affirmed Biden’s win. Republicans have also been united in their desire to do away with the Wisconsin Elections Commission, a bipartisan body created by Republicans in 2015 that oversees elections in the state.

“Giving the Republicans the opportunity to essentially depress the vote is not in the cards,” Evers said. “In the state of Wisconsin, the governor is the one who certifies the election. Can you imagine what that would look like in 2024 if I’m not re-elected?”

Evers also pushed back on the suggestion that voting rights would not be a winning issue for a campaign. “We can talk and chew gum at the same time here. We’ll be talking about the democracy piece. But we’ll also be spending a lot of time on what people believe Wisconsinites talk about every day and that is those kitchen table issues,” he said.

Over the last few years, Evers has led Wisconsin as Republicans in the state legislature have advanced what can only be described as a brazen assault on democracy. Evers has already vetoed a suite of bills that would impose new restrictions on voting, and said he expects to reject more soon. The state assembly, led by Vos, authorized a monthslong review of the 2020 election that has failed to turn up significant evidence of wrongdoing, but made sensationalist and false claims.

Earlier this month, the review released a 136-page report arguing the Wisconsin

legislature could decertify the election. Vos has refused to go along with that effort, angering many in his party, including Rathmun, who said this week he wanted to punch Vos in the nose (he has since clarified that he didn't really want to punch Vos).

Vos met with proponents of decertification this week and emerged from the meeting to say he believed there was widespread fraud. It appeared to be a clear move to thread the needle with his party, placating election deniers without embracing decertification. Evers predicted that kind of embrace of widespread fraud could backfire for Vos and Republicans.

"Most people that are thoughtful are not gonna believe it," he said. Vos' focus on voter fraud could convince people "to not vote", Evers said. "What a legacy for him."

In Wisconsin, Republicans in the legislature don't really have to worry about electoral consequences for pushing fringe theories like decertification. A decade ago, Republicans drew district lines that were so distorted to benefit Republicans it essentially guaranteed they would have a majority for the next decade. In 2018, when Evers was elected, Democrats swept all statewide races, but Republicans maintained nearly two-thirds of the seats in the state assembly.

"The will of the people is traditionally the law of the land. That is not the case at this point in time," Evers said.

Republicans are now poised to continue their majority for another decade. After the legislature and Evers fell into an expected deadlock over new maps, the Wisconsin supreme court took over mapmaking authority. It said it would adopt maps that made as little change as possible to the current ones, continuing the GOP advantage. Earlier this year they picked maps submitted by Evers, giving Democrats a boost, but maintaining the GOP advantage overall.

"We're hopeful that we will begin to narrow that gap enough that people on the other side of the aisle will feel more of a need to think through these major issues and hopefully the will of the people will start to be reestablished," he said. "But it's difficult."