

WisDems: Call on Speaker Vos to hold Rep. Behnke accountable

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MADISON, Wis. — Yesterday, state Rep. Elijah Behnke [made a violent threat](#) against Governor Tony Evers, saying “if I get to see him, I’m gonna punch him” [4:45]. Behnke was also recorded saying that Republicans should cheat to win elections.

Behnke’s comments come after Republican gubernatorial candidate Rebecca Kleefisch has repeatedly used violent and divisive rhetoric on the campaign trail, even calling on supporters to “throw hands,” asking if they have “knives out,” and saying she would “[love](#)” for school board members to receive death threats and harassment. WisDems has [highlighted these disturbing remarks](#) that are only empowering her fellow Republicans to resort to threats of violence.

Just this week, Robin Vos [stripped](#) Republican Rep. Timothy Ramthun of his office staff following Ramthun’s comments critical of Vos and Republican leadership. If Vos is serious about holding his fellow Republicans accountable, Rep. Behnke’s threats against the governor and lies about the 2020 election demand action.

Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Ben Wikler released the following statement:

“Rep. Behnke’s threats are deeply troubling. Here in Wisconsin, we believe in respecting one another, even when we disagree. But Wisconsin Republicans continue to cross the line, over and over again. Whether it’s refusing to admit that the 2020 election was legitimate or threatening physical violence against the governor, Robin Vos’s caucus is out of control.

“Our country has seen an uptick in threats against lawmakers and state and federal officials over the past year, and politicians like Rebecca Kleefisch are making divisive and dangerous comments that are only making things worse. Republican

politicians are attempting to divide us even further, when we should be healing and coming together. This behavior has to stop.

“Moreover, Behnke’s suggestion that Republicans should cheat in elections, while on taxpayer-funded time inside the Capitol, appears on its face to constitute illegal electioneering while serving in an official capacity—and a disturbing encouragement of further illegal behavior.

“We demand that Assembly Speaker Robin Vos investigate Rep. Behnke, and in the meantime, strip him of his committee assignments and remove him from the caucus. We call on Robin Vos and Rebecca Kleefisch to immediately join us in disavowing Behnke’s remarks and commit to ending violent rhetoric going forward.”