

WisDems: ICYMI: Gov. Evers' veto pen is the last line of defense against GOP extremism

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MADISON, Wis. — New [reporting from WPR](#) today profiled how Governor Evers has used his veto pen to protect Wisconsinites from Republicans' radical agenda. Republicans and Democrats alike agree that if Tim Michels were to become governor, there would be no check on the legislature, allowing Wisconsin to become a playground for the GOP's worst policy ideas.

Tim Michels has said that as governor, he looks forward to working with the legislature and "[getting those bills right](#)" that Gov. Evers has vetoed, including a bill that would endanger students by allowing loaded guns on school grounds. Legislative Republicans are eagerly anticipating having unchecked power in Wisconsin again after four years of having their disastrous policy proposals curtailed, with Speaker Vos promising that "[every single thing that Gov. Evers has vetoed](#)" will be brought before the legislature again, and "hopefully all of it becomes law."

Governor Evers has stood in the way of Republican extremism [over 120 times](#) since taking office, shutting down GOP efforts to restrict access to reproductive care, weaken gun safety regulations, siphon funding from public education and divert it to unaccountable private schools, and make it more difficult for eligible voters to cast their ballots in Wisconsin. Without Gov. Evers' common sense leadership, signing of bills that work for all of Wisconsin and vetoing of bills that would harm our state, Wisconsin would be nearly unrecognizable today.

Read more about how Gov. Evers has protected Wisconsin from GOP extremism:

WPR: Tony Evers, Tim Michels agree: Evers' veto pen is the only obstacle for more than 100 GOP bills

"Sometimes it's anyone's guess what candidates for public office would actually do if they're elected. But in the race for Wisconsin governor, [voters have been given more than 120 examples](#) of what they can expect.

"They're all bills that passed the Republican-dominated state Legislature only to be vetoed by Democratic Gov. Tony Evers. In the history of the state of Wisconsin, no governor has vetoed more bills in a single session than him.

"[Evers vetoed bills that would have expanded gun rights](#), including one that would shield gun makers from lawsuits and another declaring that federal assault weapon bans would not apply in Wisconsin. He vetoed a long list of changes to Wisconsin's safety net programs, including one that would have cut unemployment benefits by up to 12 weeks. He vetoed bills that would have dramatically reshaped education in Wisconsin, including one that would have let all students, regardless of their family's income, get state-funded vouchers to attend private school. And he vetoed around 20 plans to change election laws in Wisconsin, many of which would have added hurdles to voting absentee.

"During a campaign rally last month in Union Grove, Michels riled up the crowd when he focused on the election proposals and made a promise to Republicans.

"'We are going to take those bills — those bills that Tony Evers vetoed,' Michels said. 'We're going to get them right. I'm going to sign them.'

"At that same event, Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, Evers' adversary in the Legislature, went a step further.

"'I promise you when we are here in one year with Gov. Michels, every single thing that Gov. Evers has vetoed is going to be considered by the Legislature,' Vos said. 'And hopefully all of it becomes law.'

"This is one area where Michels and Evers are on the same page. They both say the future of these vetoes hinges on who wins their race.

"If Michels wins, these bills can get reintroduced in the next legislative session and Michels can sign them.

“And if Michels loses, and Evers is once again governor, those bills probably aren’t going anywhere.

[...]

“During a September campaign stop at a coffee shop near the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, the college Democrats who came out to support Evers were well aware of his vetoes. Several said they were worried about the dramatic changes that could be in store for state government if Evers were to lose.

“‘I think in a democracy, you need balancing voices,’ said Rianna Mukherjee, a senior at the UW-Madison majoring in political science. ‘Our Republican Legislature doesn’t balance voices.’

“‘Without a Democrat as governor ... I’m concerned that Republicans will have too much control,’ said Elliot Petroff, a sophomore studying political science. ‘We need to be able to veto things and there’s no other opposition that can do it right now.’

“Some students mentioned specific bills Evers vetoed, including some that would have restricted abortions prior to the U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down Roe v. Wade. Grant Hall, a sophomore studying computer science and data science, referenced the election bills.

“‘I fear that if he is not reelected, voting rights in Wisconsin will take a major hit,’ Hall said. ‘I think those bills would pass pretty easily, and that’s terrifying.’

“Evers’ speech to students covered other topics. He told them about what he’s for — supporting higher education, restoring abortion rights and legalizing marijuana.

“In an interview with Wisconsin Public Radio after his speech, Evers said voters are well aware of his record stopping bills that most people are against.

“‘My vetoes reflect my belief system,’ Evers said. ‘I think people understand that part of my job going forward, again, the next four years, will be to be that goalie. And prevent bad legislation from becoming law.’

[...]

“And the vetoes only tell part of the story. Evers has also called several special sessions of the Legislature to try to force lawmakers to vote on his issues, like

repealing the state's abortion ban, expanding Medicaid or enacting tougher gun laws. GOP leaders have responded with the bare minimum, gaveling in and out of the sessions without debate.

"Evers has also used his powers as governor to introduce budget bills that are packed with policies he wants. Historically, that's where the Legislature would start its budget deliberations, but Republicans have taken a different approach with Evers, rejecting hundreds of his proposals at a time and building their own budgets from the ground up.

[...]

"[Evers] said he's the only person keeping those bills and others from becoming law.

"'I mean, that's what they promised,' Evers said. 'The vast majority of them are gonna come back as quickly as possible. And (Michels) will sign them. Absolutely. That's a statement of his value system that I think is the reason that people should be voting for me.'"