

# WisDems: ICYMI - NYT: 2 huge races stand between G.O.P. and near-total power

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**MADISON, Wis.** — Re-electing Governor Evers is crucial to protecting free and fair elections in Wisconsin. Governor Evers has been the last line of defense against radical legislation attacking voting rights and undermining democracy, but if a Republican wins this fall, all of that legislation could come back and become the law of the land.

Since his campaign began, Michels has staked out the most radical positions on elections. He said that “[President Trump probably would be president right now if we had election integrity](#)” and that [he does not think that Trump “did anything wrong”](#) on January 6. Michels also [said](#) “everything will be on the table” when it comes to decertifying the 2020 election.

Should Michels become governor, he would make partisan changes to Wisconsin’s voting laws on day one.

Read more on how the Wisconsin governor’s election stands between democracy and an extremist Republican take over of elections.

**New York Times: [In Wisconsin, 2 Huge Races Stand Between G.O.P. and Near-Total Power](#)**

Nowhere in the country have Republican lawmakers been more aggressive in their attempts to seize a partisan edge than in Wisconsin. Having [gerrymandered the Legislature](#) past the point that it can be flipped, they are now [pushing intensely](#) to take greater control over the state’s voting infrastructure ahead of the 2024

presidential contest.

Two pivotal elections in the coming months are likely to decide if that happens.

The soaring stakes of the first, the November race for governor, became clear last week when Tim Michels, a construction magnate endorsed by former President Donald J. Trump, [won the Republican primary](#).

His victory raised the prospect that Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat who has vetoed a range of Republican voting bills, could soon be replaced by a Trump ally who has embraced calls to dismantle the state's bipartisan election commission, invoked conspiratorial films about the 2020 election and even expressed openness to [the false idea](#) that Mr. Trump's loss can still be decertified.

[...]

Wisconsin's next two elections are inexorably linked. Mr. Michels has said that he will seek to change the state's voting laws on his first day as governor. If he is indeed elected and moves quickly, new voting procedures could be in place before a new justice is elected to a 10-year term in April — and the court combined with Mr. Michels would have wide leeway to set voting rules for the 2024 presidential election, when Wisconsin is widely expected to again be a central presidential battleground.

“If they're going to cherry-pick things that they know will depress a Democratic vote, it will absolutely impact every Democrat, including Joe Biden,” Mr. Evers said in an interview on Thursday. Referring to Mr. Michels, he added, “His election certainly would focus on depressing the vote of Democrats, no question about it.”

During the primary campaign, Mr. Michels promised to replace the Wisconsin Elections Commission with an agency that would effectively be under the control of Republicans. And while he never explicitly endorsed decertifying Wisconsin's 2020 presidential election, Mr. Michels did not rule it out, either, saying enough to appease Mr. Trump — who has [repeatedly demanded](#) such a move.

At campaign stops and during primary debates, Mr. Michels invoked films about the 2020 election that propagate conspiracy theories falsely suggesting that Mr. Trump was the real winner. He claimed without evidence that there had been fraud in the state and pledged to prosecute the perpetrators.

“I’ve seen the movies ‘[2000 Mules](#)’ and ‘Rigged.’ And I’ll tell you, I know that there was a lot of voter fraud,” Mr. Michels said at a recent rally in Kaukauna, a small industrial city in the state’s [politically swingy Fox Valley](#). “When I am sworn in as governor, I will look at all the evidence that is out there in January and I will do the right thing. Everything is on the table. And if people broke the law, broke election laws, I will prosecute them.”

Since winning the primary on Tuesday, Mr. Michels has spent less energy highlighting his support from Mr. Trump and his focus on election issues. On Wednesday, he removed a declaration about his Trump endorsement from the home page of his campaign website. After this New York Times reporter [pointed it out on Twitter](#), the Michels campaign resurrected the line on his site.

Mr. Michels’s campaign aides did not respond to requests for comment.

In perhaps the best illustration of Mr. Michels’s general-election swivel, he promised attendees at a Trump rally a week ago that “my No. 1 priority is election integrity” — but in his victory speech on Tuesday night, he said, “Jobs and the economy are going to be my No. 1 priority.”

During [a Thursday morning interview on a conservative radio show in Milwaukee](#), his first media appearance since winning the nomination, Mr. Michels also did not mention the 2020 election or his plans to change how voting works in Wisconsin.

Instead, he has sought to remind listeners of what they liked about Mr. Trump while tethering Mr. Evers to Mr. Biden, whose approval rating in Wisconsin [was at 40 percent](#) in June, according to a Marquette University Law School poll. In [his first post-primary TV ad](#), Mr. Michels calls Mr. Biden and Mr. Evers “two peas in a pod.”

“Donald Trump was a successful businessman, Donald Trump was tough,” Mr. Michels said in the radio interview. “I’d gladly compare Joe Biden to Donald Trump.”

To what degree Mr. Michels might change Wisconsin’s election system would be determined in large part by the Republicans who control the Legislature — most of whom supported his opponent in the Republican primary, former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch.

State Senator Kathy Bernier, [a rare Republican state legislator in Wisconsin](#) who has publicly declared that Mr. Trump fairly lost the state’s 2020 election, said in an

interview last week that during Mr. Michels's primary campaign, he had displayed an ignorance about the administration of Wisconsin elections that reflected his lack of government experience.

"Mr. Michels is a fish out of water," said Ms. Bernier, who [announced her retirement](#) in January after calling for Republican investigations into the 2020 election to end. "When I ran for the Assembly, I, too, had some ideas that weren't workable, but good ideas. He needs some advice and training in all sorts of issues."