

WisDems: “Knives Out” — February 17th

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MADISON, Wis. — Welcome to “Knives Out”— Rebecca Kleefisch’s favorite phrase and a weekly roundup of the infighting between the radical Republicans running for Wisconsin governor.

The GOP is locked in a heated and brutal primary for governor, where Rebecca Kleefisch, Kevin Nicholson, and Tim Ramthun are trying to prove they are the most divisive candidate in the race. What’s going on in the Republican Party is so outrageous, it’s hard to keep track of all of their blunders — so we’ve got you covered:

Feeling the Heat, Kleefisch Calls GOP Primary a “Dumpster Fire”

Kleefisch [finally let everyone know how she really feels about Kevin Nicholson](#) — calling him an “opportunist” and a “shapeshifter” who is just here because he couldn’t run for Senate. She also said all this infighting could turn the primary into “a dumpster fire,” and placed the blame squarely on Nicholson, who “lights the matches and tosses them in.”

Then she reminded Nicholson that he has a “100% losing streak” in Wisconsin elections, and aptly pointed out the last time Nicholson ran in a primary, it was a disaster for Republicans. He bled the other candidate dry during a brutal and divisive primary so that she didn’t have enough money to compete in the general election, and ultimately, Republicans lost. Is anyone else getting deja vu?

Nicholson, for his part, ignored Kleefisch’s desperate pleas and came out swinging against Kleefisch’s plan to make radical changes to our election system, calling it “an attempt to grab headlines” — while [proposing his own unnecessary changes](#), in

an attempt to grab headlines. The infighting between the two camps even [trickles down to their senior staff](#).

All Republicans have to offer Wisconsin is a divisive primary for governor that is tearing their party apart.

Trumpy Tim Makes It Official

Far-right conspiracy theorist and Trump wannabe Tim Ramthun announced his campaign for governor of Wisconsin, inserting more chaos into the already off-the-rails Republican primary and dealing another major blow to Kleefisch's path to the nomination.

[Trumpy Tim](#) acts like a joke, but the threats to democracy posed by him and Wisconsin Republicans are real. Multiple [recounts](#), [court cases](#), [audits](#), and even an [investigation](#) by Trump's own Department of Homeland Security have confirmed that the 2020 election was "[safe and secure](#)." [That hasn't stopped Ramthun from trying to overturn the 2020 election](#) anyway. Just this week, Ramthun held [a rally](#) trying to drum up support from conservative lawmakers to support his proposal [to decertify the 2020 election](#).

Ramthun's proposal to decertify the election is also adding gasoline to the dumpster fire, dividing Republicans across the state. Assembly Speaker Robin Vos [stripped Ramthun of his lone staff member](#) for spreading "disinformation" and criticizing Vos. The issue has caused a fissure among county parties, [some of which are calling for Vos's resignation](#).

While Ramthun hasn't received a Trump endorsement yet, Trump has previously indicated support for Ramthun, calling him "[my kind of guy](#)." Trump previously snubbed Kleefisch by [calling on Sean Duffy to run](#) instead of endorsing her.

Kleefisch Flip-Flops on Who Won 2020 Election

Rebecca Kleefisch is continuing to change her views in order to compete in this divisive and competitive primary. A few days after Trumpy Tim's announcement, Kleefisch was asked if Donald Trump won the election. Her answer? She's "[watching in real time](#)" to see the results of the two partisan-driven, sham audits, [one of which is being run by people who can't spell](#).

Kleefisch had previously admitted that Joe Biden won the election, but now that

she's facing down a swath of primary challengers, her views have suddenly changed. This isn't the first time Kleefisch has flip-flopped on an issue — she [came out in favor of eradicating the state elections agency](#) that she played a huge role in creating as lieutenant governor, and [she used a voting method in 2020 that she now wants abolished](#).

Scott Walker Endorses Insider Candidate by Touting Success of Outsiders in GOP Primaries

Failing to read the room entirely, Scott Walker endorsed Rebecca Kleefisch this morning by [touting the success of an outsider](#) in a tough Republican primary. Kleefisch has promoted [endorsements](#) from some of the most powerful conservative interests across the state, clearly running as the favorite of political insiders.

Being the “establishment” candidate is a sore subject for Kleefisch. When she tore into Kevin Nicholson on WSAU, Kleefisch [denied three separate times that she was an establishment candidate](#), despite being the ultimate insider choice.

Walker's feelings on Kleefisch have come a long way over the past decade, when his own campaign manager said she was “[radioactive](#).”