

WisDems: PolitiFact confirms that Tim Michels supports domestic abusers buying guns

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MADISON, Wis. — Yesterday, [PolitiFact](#) confirmed that Tim Michels opposes closing a gun law loophole that allows domestic abusers to buy guns.

Throughout his campaign, Michels has touted a radical pro-gun agenda that would endanger our communities and disregard victims of domestic violence.

[PolitiFact](#) determined that Michels is opposed to closing the loophole based on his previous insults toward domestic abuse survivors and his radical, anti-gun safety positions. In a Republican primary town hall, Michels [stated](#), “I want to make sure that law-abiding gun owners aren’t having their guns confiscated because an angry ex, ex-spouse, makes a complaint.” And in a radio interview, he [emphasized his stance](#) by equating closing the gun law loophole to taking away a Second Amendment right.

Michels’ radical gun policies are completely out of touch with the rest of the state. He has pledged to lift restrictions on firearms, opposes an assault weapons ban, and said he will not support “red flag” laws, which are backed by [81% of Wisconsin voters](#).

Gov. Evers supports common sense gun laws. He has spent his first term fighting to protect our communities, despite Republican efforts to block his attempts and pass their own radical pro-gun agendas. Gun violence is a national public health crisis that is affecting communities all across the country, including Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, [firearms](#) were used as a weapon in the majority of domestic violence deaths in 2021, and over a third of the perpetrators who used a gun were not

legally allowed to own a gun in Wisconsin.

This PolitiFact confirmed what we already knew. Tim Michels is a divisive candidate who cares more about pandering to radical interest groups rather than protecting our own communities. His method to disparage domestic violence survivors as a way to promote his pro-gun agenda is appalling, and just proves how extremely wrong he is for Wisconsin.

Read more about Tim Michels' pro-gun agenda and opposition to protecting victims of domestic violence:

PolitiFact: [Better Wisconsin Together on target with ad on Michels and gun law loophole](#)

In Wisconsin's race for governor, each candidate (and their supporters) have been portraying the other as too radical to lead the state.

That includes the A Better Wisconsin Together Political Fund, which in a campaign ad slams Republican challenger Tim Michels on what it terms a gun law "loophole."

"There's a dangerous loophole that lets some domestic abusers buy guns," intones the voiceover in the 15-second ad, which was launched online Sept. 12. "Politicians in both parties are trying to close the loophole. You know who said they won't? Radical Tim Michels."

Michels, of course, is in a hotly contested battle against Democratic Gov. Tony Evers, who is seeking a second term in the Nov. 8 election.

The claim comes in the wake of a May 2022 ruling by the state Supreme Court in a case from Brown County. In its ruling, the court unanimously reversed a circuit judge's ruling that a man's conviction for disorderly conduct counted as a domestic violence misdemeanor under federal law, which would then prohibit gun possession.

The state high court found that, although the offense was domestic and violent, it's not the facts that matter, but the nature of Wisconsin's disorderly conduct statute. That law allows conviction for a variety of actions, but since violence is not a required element, it doesn't match the federal definition.

Attorney General Josh Kaul, a Democrat whose office argued the case to the court, said at the time, "This decision means that more perpetrators of domestic violence

will be able to possess firearms and get concealed carry licenses.”

So, is the group right about Michels’ position?

Michels at WISN-TV town hall

A Better Wisconsin Together describes itself as a state-based research and communications hub for progressives. When we asked for backup to the claim, a spokesperson pointed us to a 52-second video clip of Michels posted online by state Democrats from an Aug. 1 town hall meeting before the Republican primary.

We went back to the full hourlong debate, posted on YouTube by forum sponsor WISN-TV, Channel 12, to see it all in context. Michels was responding to a question from an audience member who was described as an advocate for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The question:

“What’s your plan for reducing and/or eliminating the repeat acts of gun violence from those who have minor convictions and are still able to possess and/or purchase firearms in the state of Wisconsin?”

“Yeah, so like I said, guns haven’t changed, society has changed. And I want to make sure that law abiding gun owners aren’t having their guns confiscated because an angry ex, ex-spouse, makes a complaint. ‘Oh, he made a threat to me and then the police have to go confiscate his guns.’ The Second Amendment is constitutional. It’s a right given by the Constitution to bear arms, and I will support the Second Amendment. I believe what we have to do is enforce the gun laws that are on the books.”

More on Michels’ position

The Michels team did not respond to our request for comment by deadline. However, we found Michels has been quite clear on where he stands on the issue. Michels was a guest July 18 on the “Vicki McKenna Show” on iHeart Radio. Here is the relevant portion of the conversation:

McKenna: Would you promise — the Biden administration, along with some Republican support, just passed a piece of gun control legislation that is going to try to entice states to adopt red flag laws? Would you — in exchange for dollars from

the federal government. Would you pledge not to take that money, and not to encourage the Republican Assembly and Senate to pass red flag laws?

Michels: The federal government wants to attach dollars to some agenda that they have, and we won't take it if I don't agree with it. ... I own a lot of guns and I know how to use them properly. Red flag laws, you know, people are entitled to due process. You just can't have somebody make a complaint against you, and ... your Second Amendment right be taken away. Now, that won't happen here in Wisconsin, when I'm governor.

Under red flag laws, of course, typically police or family members are able to ask a court to force someone suspected of being a danger to himself or others to give up their firearms temporarily. Only 19 states and the District of Columbia have such laws, according to the Giffords Center, but recent federal legislation provided money to encourage states to establish such programs.

Many states enacted such laws after mass shootings at schools. For example, in 2018, 14 states enacted them after a gunman opened fire at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, killing 17 people.

Republicans have balked at a push by Evers to put such a system in place in Wisconsin. For example, in November 2019, Evers called a special legislative session to take up two bills to expand background checks on firearm sales and implement a new red flag law. GOP leaders opened and closed the session within seconds, taking no action.

Our ruling

The A Better Wisconsin Together Political Fund said Tim Michels "opposes closing the loophole that allows domestic abusers to buy guns."

During a Republican primary forum, Michels noted: "I want to make sure that law-abiding gun owners aren't having their guns confiscated because an angry ex, ex-spouse, makes a complaint." And in a radio interview, he said "You just can't have somebody make a complaint against you, and... your Second Amendment right be taken away. Now, that won't happen here in Wisconsin, when I'm governor."

Michels through his statements suggests that closing this gun law loophole would be equivalent to taking away a Second Amendment right.

We rate this claim True.