

# Bill Kaplan: Wisconsin Republicans who support the Constitution

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The 2024 presidential and congressional elections must be about upholding the Constitution, preserving democracy and protecting voting rights. Former Wyoming GOP Representative Liz Cheney said: “At this moment we’re confronting a domestic threat that we have never faced before – and that is a former president who is attempting to unravel the foundations of our constitutional republic. ... Republicans cannot both be loyal to Donald Trump and loyal to the Constitution.”

However, Trump has a different Pledge of Allegiance in mind. Trump said: “We pledge to you that we will root out the communists, Marxists, fascists and the radical left thugs that live like vermin within the confines of our country that lie and steal and cheat on elections.” A five alarm fire. A 1930s moment.

There should not be a partisan divide on upholding the Constitution, preserving democracy and protecting voting rights. We are all Americans, living in the greatest country in the world. Fortunately, there are Wisconsin Republicans who support the Constitution and understand the meaning of The Pledge of Allegiance. They include former Gov. Tommy Thompson, former U.S. Rep. Reid Ribble, former state Sen. Kathy Bernier, former U.S. Rep. Tom Petri, former state Sen. Dale Schultz and former Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner.

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Thompson, the longest serving and perhaps most popular governor, has joined with Ribble to serve on the Wisconsin Advisory Council of Keep Our Republic to “counter election denialism” (WSJ). Bernier will be the group’s Wisconsin director. Thompson

said: “The eyes of the nation will be on Wisconsin once again in 2024. We may not agree on everything, but we all can do our part to lower the temperature and strengthen our democracy.” Ribble added: “January 6, 2021 changed everything for me as I saw the damage that was done by a politician who could not accept the people’s choice for president.” And, Bernier exclaimed: “Keep Our Republic will stay true to our mission – to discover, highlight and help prevent an array of extraordinary threats to American democracy.” Profiles in courage.

Petri is on the same page as the above Republicans. He said: “What we observed come to a head on January 6, 2021, was something we had never seen before and hope no American ever sees again; an effort directed by the sitting president, residing in the White House, to overturn the lawfully certified vote of the American people in the 2020 presidential election” (MJS). Spot-on.

Schultz, closer to home, recently wrote an extraordinary op-ed for the WSJ. He welcomed the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s hearing a case challenging the fairness and constitutionality of state legislative district maps. Schultz said: “Wisconsin has been one of the most gerrymandered states in the nation – that’s a fact.” Finally, Sensenbrenner tried his best to strengthen the Voting Rights Act, weakened by the U.S. Supreme Court. He knows discrimination is real and requires “federal oversight.” House Democrats should have supported Sensenbrenner’s bill, which might have fared better among congressional Republicans.

All of these Wisconsin Republican giants are standing up for America and the Constitution. Wisconsin should listen. It’s imperative.

*-Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C., for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 – 2009.*