

WisDems: ICYMI: Wisconsin Democrats seek to flip script on gun rights, target GOP's Tiffany

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"I never thought the day would come when a Republican president, a Republican candidate for governor, and Republican candidates for Congress would try to take that right away from me in order to justify the murder of an American citizen" — Hunter and Sportsman Wayde Lawler

MADISON, Wis. — [New reporting](#) from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel details how Wisconsin Democrats held Tom Tiffany accountable for flipping on his gun rights position to appease Trump and justify the murder of Alex Pretti. The reporting also notes that several Second Amendment rights supporters, including gun trainers and the NRA, have pushed back on similar comments.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#): Wisconsin Democrats seek to flip script on gun rights, target GOP's Tiffany

By: Molly Beck

Wisconsin Democrats are highlighting an unusual issue for the party ahead of the midterm election: Second Amendment rights.

On Thursday, Democratic lawmakers and party leaders criticized Republican candidate for governor Tom Tiffany for recent comments he made regarding whether people with concealed carry licenses should attend protests. The issue came up after the [killing of Alex Pretti](#), a Minneapolis ICU nurse who was protesting the Trump administration's handling of immigration enforcement.

Pretti's death has turned the issue of gun rights on its head politically after President Donald Trump and members of his administration have [suggested it was wrong or illegal](#) for Pretti to attend a protest carrying a concealed handgun, for which he had a license.

The comments drew criticism from gun rights advocates and bristled conservatives who are strong supporters of Second Amendment rights.

In a Jan. 26 news conference, Tiffany was asked whether concealed carry permit holders should be allowed to bring firearms to protests.

Tiffany said, "If it's provided in the law in your state, yes, you should be able to concealed carry. But, you should also think about, when you're going to go into a situation like that, be sure to think about the ramifications of that."

Tiffany, who has served in the state Legislature and in Congress, has long supported measures that preserve or expand the rights of gun owners and received an A+ rating from the National Rifle Association in his 2020 campaign for Congress.

William Garcia, chairman of the 3rd Congressional District Democratic Party, characterized Tiffany's comments as flipping on the issue of gun rights to "justify the murder of Alex Pretti."

"We know that Tom Tiffany flip-flopped because he is Trump's parrot, saying and doing whatever the guy who unlocks his cage will allow," Garcia said in a virtual press conference on Thursday, Feb. 5.

In response to Garcia's comments, Tiffany said he will "always" protect the Second Amendment as governor.

"Every law-abiding citizen has the right to carry, and I will always protect Americans' right to keep and bear arms," he said in a statement. "Individuals must still follow the law, whether they are carrying or not, which includes not interfering with law enforcement or resisting arrest."

Democrats are seizing on the Second Amendment issue as they gear up for the midterm elections later this year. The party's turnabout on the issue comes after years of criticizing Republicans for not supporting measures that would add more restrictions on gun possession.

"I never thought the day would come when a Republican president, a Republican candidate for governor, and Republican candidates for Congress would try to take that right away from me in order to justify the murder of an American citizen," Wayne Lawler, chairman of the Vernon County Democratic Party, said at the news conference of the right to carry firearms. Lawler said he is a hunter and a gun owner.

Pretti, 37, a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs nurse and concealed carry license holder, had a semiautomatic handgun concealed in a holster on his back waist.

After Pretti was tackled, his gun was taken by one agent. Pretti was then shot by a different agent. Video indicates Pretti did not draw his gun before being taken down; he had a cell phone in his hand.

After the Minneapolis shootings, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said, "I don't know of any peaceful protester that shows up with a gun and ammunition rather than a sign."

FBI Director Kash Patel said, "You cannot bring a firearm, loaded, with multiple magazines, to any sort of protest that you want. It's that simple."

And asked about the Pretti shooting, Trump on Jan. 27 said, "You can't walk in with guns."

Several gun trainers said the comments are dangerous mischaracterizations of the Second Amendment, which guarantees concealed carry of firearms, including at protests. The National Rifle Association and other groups have also pushed back.