



The following report represents the combined effort of hundreds of patriots who realize that the conservative movement and Republican Party of Wisconsin is a crucial firewall against the increasingly radical socialist beliefs of the Democrat Party. I sincerely thank them all for their efforts and long-term commitment.

The post-election assessment was the first step in making necessary improvements to the RPW structure and operations following the disappointing losses of all our statewide candidates in 2018. Appropriately, the report is brutally honest, but I do believe it accurately reflects the feedback obtained over the course of this three-month in-depth process.

I will let the report speak for itself, but I would like to highlight the top-line actions I believe the party must implement to create a structure that will produce election victories in any political environment.

First, let me discuss actions already taken. We are incredibly fortunate that Mark Jefferson agreed to assume an expanded executive director role. Mark was RPW executive director from 2007 to 2011. He left to become an RNC regional director, which included Wisconsin. He will operate as the CEO of the RPW, reporting to the Executive Committee, but with greater authority than a traditional ED.

Andrew Hitt, a partner in Michael Best law firm and resident of Appleton, was recently elected party chairman. He was the lead attorney for the Trump campaign overseeing the 2016 presidential election recount in Wisconsin. He brings that expertise, together with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to help steer the party and build a strong financial base.

With new leadership, the party is now ready for improvement. Simply stated, the party's focus must return to the grass roots. The state party should be structured to support activity at the county party level. It will liaise with campaigns and other conservative and like-minded groups. It should be a clearinghouse for data, information, training support, and campaign messaging. The goal will be to open offices around the state staffed by full-time paid professionals whose primary function will be to support the county parties.

County parties need to be supercharged for action to include voter identification and contact, volunteer recruitment and training, candidate recruitment and training, identification of events within counties for effective campaigning and party-building, efficient yard sign distribution and placement, membership unification, and the sharing of best practices among county parties.

The election of Judge Hagedorn proved the effectiveness of good candidates who work hard and rely more on the grassroots and less on political consultants. I do not deny the importance of good ads, but the effectiveness of energized volunteers is too often overlooked. Attempting to field candidates for every line on the ballot will give us more hard-working candidates that produce more Republican voters. This is what I have been referring to as "trickle up" elections.

The next 18 months will be an exciting time and a great opportunity to build a grassroots juggernaut that is unparalleled in U.S. politics. I am committed to doing everything I can to turn this goal into a reality. I look forward to working with all of you to make it happen.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ray Johnson", written in a cursive style.

20/20  
2020

**RPW 2018 REVIEW**

# 20/20

## 2018 REVIEW

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Tom Schreibel, Chair**    **Mary Buestrin, Co-Chair**

Senator Ron Johnson    Reince Priebus

Representative Tyler August    Andrew Hitt

Brad Courtney    Brian Westrate

Gerard Randall    Bob Spindell

Ivan Gamboa    Kim Babler

Jesse Garza    Kathy Kiernan

Kelly Ruh    Carol Brunner

Darryl Carlson    Mark Jefferson

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# MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE

As the old adage goes, hindsight is 20/20. It's always easy to look back and see clearly mistakes and successes. It's much harder to look into the future and have the same clarity. The Republican Party of Wisconsin is at a crossroads – we've reached an intersection where we have to take what we learned in the 2018 cycle and use that to chart our path forward.

We have to take our 20/20 hindsight and turn it into a vision for 2020.

As Republicans, we often look to business as a model for achieving efficiency and quality while eliminating waste. In business, in health care, in all industries where continual improvement is the expectation, they take a clear-eyed look at their past struggles and build solutions so that the same mistakes aren't made again. This is done by conducting regular evaluations and reviews of the systems and programs in place.

In 2018 we lost all statewide elections on the ballot. Despite the national climate, we had many positives on our side. Republicans again dominated in the legislative races—as we have most of the past quarter century—with better organizations, better candidates and better campaigns. Yet statewide, we had seasoned candidates, a strong economy, and an engaged grassroots organization, but still came up short.

In December, we set out to briefly look back while we prepare to move forward. A committee, representing a cross section of our membership, was formed to evaluate our strengths and weaknesses. We talked with elected officials, volunteers, paid staff, operatives and donors both large and small. We sought out opinion leaders inside and outside the party. We discussed what worked and what didn't - with particular focus on the recent cycle.

Congressional district Party leaders held conference calls and meetings with county parties and activists. Dozens of conference calls were held around the state that included hundreds of people. We conducted a survey asking a group of key Party activists specific questions on RPW interactions with the grassroots. We talked to people who had positive things to say, and we talked to people who told harsh truths.

We got some kudos and some kicks. And now is the time to make changes. Support and unity are more important after a difficult cycle, one where we faced losses. This is a tremendous opportunity to clear the air and refocus efforts on the things that matter as we move into the vitally important 2020 presidential election.

We want to thank the many people who took time to make this report possible. We could not reach everyone who would have wanted to share their perspective, and we want to be clear that this is just the beginning of an ongoing conversation. Let us know what you think. We appreciate your honesty, your passion, and your commitment to fixing what's broken and standing shoulder to shoulder as a strong GOP team as we face a presidential campaign that promises to be incredible.

Forward to 2020!

message

“EVERY SYSTEM  
IS PERFECTLY DESIGNED  
TO GET THE RESULT IT GETS.”

W. EDWARDS DEMING

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 20/20 HINDSIGHT

State parties that spend years in the enviable position of having a strong governor directing the organization and raising funds often follow a similar pattern, with some strong positives and some problems developing over time.

Wisconsin is no different.

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# key findings

**We were fortunate to have had Governor Walker’s personal commitment to the grassroots** and to policy initiatives that have helped keep activists engaged and confident in an agenda that was moving Wisconsin forward.

Over time, the Republican Party of Wisconsin drifted from its roots as a grassroots organization and became a top-down bureaucracy, disconnected from local activists, recklessly reliant on outside consultants and took for granted money that was raised to keep the Party functioning properly.

Local party leaders told us of their concerns about RPW’s organizational structure, a breakdown in communications, and a lack of a clear strategy.

Further, as we looked at the basic operation, we found that there was an additional problem concealed from the grassroots leaders – cash flow concerns and debt.

While it’s not ideal to be in problem-solving mode now, state parties in key, target swing states that do not have a sitting governor do have the opportunity to redirect and focus energy where it matters.

This course correction does matter, and must be our top priority.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- » Management of RPW was essentially outsourced to the governor’s campaign operation
- » Grassroots needs and expectations were not met in the areas of:
  - ◇ Training
  - ◇ Communication
  - ◇ Unity

**Recommendation:** Work on restoring the traditional structure, increase interaction with activists and accountability with staff. Provide services like training on subjects from membership and volunteer recruitment, to fundraising and compliance, to campaign management.

#### COMMUNICATION

- » Most grassroots don’t think RPW communicates adequately
- » Sometimes unhelpful, unresponsive, even rude staff
- » Website cumbersome and not as useful as it should be
- » Campaign to RPW staff and RPW staff to grassroots communication was lacking
- » Campaign messaging and coordination problems
- » Media relations need improvement

**Recommendation:** Create communication structures and opportunities to keep members informed, engaged and ready to help with messaging.

#### FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- » Overreliance on consultants exploded costs and diminished accountability
- » Little RPW oversight of consultant contracts or spending existed
- » More Party functions must be done in-house

**Recommendation:** Retire debt, cut waste, restore accountability and implement common-sense financial controls

“THE WORKER IS NOT THE PROBLEM.  
THE PROBLEM IS AT THE TOP!  
MANAGEMENT!”

W. EDWARDS DEMING

70%  
OF COUNTY PARTY  
LEADERS SAID NO

when asked if the RPW provided county party leadership with the necessary tools and training.

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# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

By design, county parties make up the state party and state parties make up the national committee in a bottom-up, grassroots structure.

It's traditional, and important, for a state party to work closely with its sitting governor's organization. But over time, as is the case in many states with an incumbent governor, the RPW drifted from that grassroots organization and morphed into a top-down entity, reliant on and answerable to consultants, distanced from the people who are the foundation of the party.

One survey respondent commented:

*“Concentrate its efforts on building the grassroots; not trying to run campaigns. Campaigns should be run by the candidates; not the state party. The state party should be there to support the campaign of the candidates, not run them.”*

This speaks to the disconnect between RPW and the grassroots. If a state party is to be successful, it must resist the urge to be all things to all people. Resources won't allow it and it's arrogant to suggest that only RPW should contribute to the mission of advancing candidates and messages.

Common themes emerged surrounding the RPW organizational structure: training, responsiveness and party unity building.

## TRAINING

County leaders want to have access to training for membership on a number of items including compliance, fundraising, and recruitment.

There are opportunities for RPW to do training in all these areas. Some training manuals just need to be dusted off, updated and re-offered. Other training will be available as the Trump Victory effort ramps up, and will focus on grassroots activation. We will learn what the program will look like and how we can complement the Trump Victory effort in the coming weeks and months.

Other training needs can be developed in-house, or coordinated with the RNC or neighboring states. Our legislative committees offer training to their staff and candidates every cycle that's been quite successful and could likely be shared.

Our many successful county parties can mentor other parties as well. Best practices for county party building should be shared readily at statewide county party trainings. Staff training volunteers is helpful and will be utilized - but peer to peer training can be even more valuable and must be put to use.

leadership

# ORGANIZATION

accountability

Continued.

As has been the case in previous years, Election Day operations and trainings will be conducted as well - at the state level, in cooperation with interested parties and in full accordance with the law. Election laws must be followed by everyone; the process must be fair and people have a right to be confident in the results.

## RESPONSIVENESS

There were a number of concerns raised regarding the issue of the responsiveness of RPW to the counties. While some of the concerns in this area will be addressed in the communication section, there are problems that are structural and organizational.

It was sometimes unclear to county party members whether individual staff worked for a campaign or RPW. There were a number of notable exceptions, but often RPW field staff were criticized for doing their job as though they were “the boss of” local party members. Many felt the staff weren’t properly trained and couldn’t give appropriate answers or information. Others were concerned that the staff did not care about the local membership or volunteers and focused exclusively on metrics, goals and “quotas.” There is a general sense that these problems have gotten worse over time.

It is true that staff have been held accountable to meet aggressive metrics. That will not change. But volunteers and

local party leaders, along with the staff assigned to their area, must be treated with respect.

As resources become available, there should be an RPW staff person designated as the county liaison so there is one point of contact that counties can rely on to field questions and concerns promptly and accurately. This individual can be among those accountable for assuring that RPW is meeting its obligations to the grassroots.

Staff who fell short of expectations are no longer a part of the organization mainly due to the contraction that occurs after every election cycle. But going forward, RPW staff, top to bottom, must be trained to execute their job while working collaboratively with the activists.

## BUILDING UNITY

There was substantive feedback regarding the focus on doors using the mobile app instead of phones. Most of those party activists who responded to questions felt that there should be some opportunity for volunteers to work phones in a field office, as it builds unity and team spirit. Further, some volunteers are not able to do doors but still want to help the cause.

As fewer people have land lines, the trend has been to shift away from phones because doors are a more effective way to reach voters. Substantive research

shows person-to-person interaction at the doors is more motivating and persuasive than a phone conversation or mailed literature.

That said, nothing has replaced the camaraderie of a busy field office. There are plenty of things to do there - from thank you notes and dear neighbor post cards, to pledge cards for medium-to-low turnout voters. Some phones do remain necessary in major offices.

Some felt that paid staff should be working on doors all day. Others felt the field staff spent too much time on doors instead of recruiting volunteers. This cycle, more than a quarter of all door attempts were completed by paid staff. Our partners at the RNC will surely want to see more volunteer organizing and less direct door knocking from paid staff.

*A good organization is only as strong as its bench. We need to develop leaders in the party through mentorship programs and training in special skill areas, so that we have a strong set of smart, skilled leaders.*

Organizing will continue to occur in places not traditionally focused on by the GOP.

## MINORITY OUTREACH

The Wisconsin GOP is one of very few state parties that continue to fund full time organizers focused in the Hispanic and African American communities. Based out of the Party’s Waukesha office, where our field program will be based this cycle, our engagement directors have set up meetings and roundtables with leaders in those communities.

Candidates, including Supreme Court Justice-Elect Brian Hagedorn were introduced to community leaders through these efforts. We remain committed to earning votes in neighborhoods in every part of Wisconsin.

## YOUNG VOTERS

We also need to focus significantly more attention on our college campuses, and support our College Republicans, who find themselves outnumbered and too often unsupported.

College campuses have an obligation to allow diverse points of view to be heard, and that includes the center right perspective. The RPW can work with, train and be a clearing house for best practices. County parties can be mentors to their local CR activists.

With the high turnover rates in the student population, county parties can provide assistance and be a stabilizing force for the conservative cause on campuses and we need to do all we can to support campus organizing.

We welcome the assistance offered by the Republican National Committee with this undertaking, but understand that local efforts must drive its success.

## THE GENDER GAP

It’s not news that a gender gap exists. Democrats are losing with men and Republicans are losing with women.

On our side, one cannot look at the number of women hired as Party staff or included in high level campaign messaging and strategy sessions and make a straight-faced argument that we’ve done enough to include a group that represents approximately 52% of the vote.

We can and will do better. The problem didn’t develop overnight and it will take time to develop more experienced staff and the next generation of Party leaders.

We commend the work of the Federation

# ORGANIZATION

Continued.

of Republican Women and look forward to partnering with them to the extent that campaign finance laws allow.

Democrats and the media will continue to enjoy pointing to this problem while ignoring their own weaknesses.

The fact is we need to improve, and we are committed to providing opportunities for women at all levels within the RPW.

We urge others in the Party to observe this stark contrast:

**While women were virtually absent from the upper levels of the RPW and in many of the major campaigns, the consistently successful legislative campaign committees have had women in top leadership roles for nearly a decade.**

## LOCAL EFFORTS

Finally, counties voiced concerns that local and non-partisan races did not see enough support or attention from RPW. Local parties have a major role to play here. Developing a strong grassroots network, along with the training opportunities addressed above will help develop potential candidates, and bolster GOP support for local races.

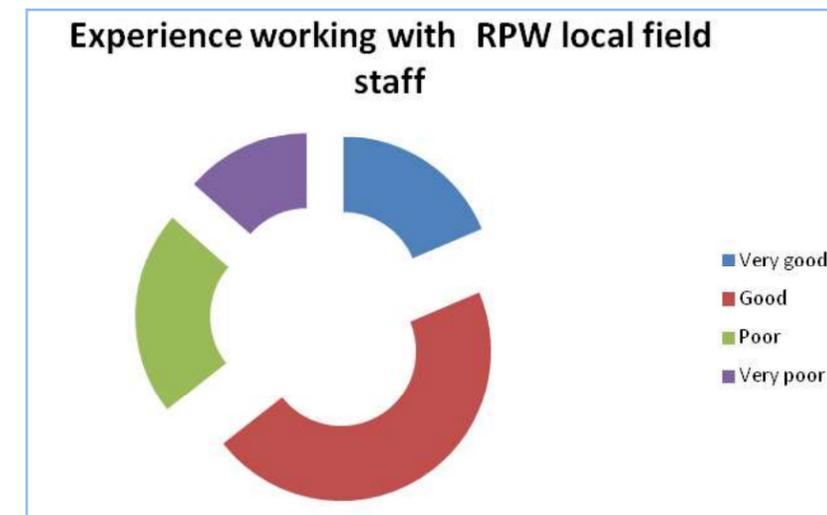
## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- » Support the role of the grassroots through training opportunities, including:
  - ◇ Compliance and reporting
  - ◇ Fundraising
  - ◇ Social media
  - ◇ Organization and management
- ◇ Candidate and campaigns
- ◇ Ethnic and minority engagement
- ◇ Campus organizing and support
- ◇ Increase opportunities for women in the Party
- ◇ Recruitment and membership development
- ◇ Staff and volunteers
- » Designate a liaison to the county parties
- » Maintain local offices with various volunteering activities
- » Focus on local races to build toward the future
- » Build a bench in communication, fundraising, parliamentary process and best practices in the field

teamwork

## CNN EXIT POLL COMPARISONS

INDEPENDENTS	AFRICAN AMERICAN	MEN	WOMEN
2014	2014	2014	2014
Walker 54%	Walker 10%	Walker 60%	Walker 45%
Burke 43%	Burke 90%	Burke 39%	Burke 54%
2018	2018	2018	2018
Walker 45%	Walker 15%	Walker 52%	Walker 45%
Evers 52%	Evers 85%	Evers 45%	Evers 54%



56%

TIMELY &amp;

SATISFACTORY RESPONSE

A slim majority of survey respondents said RPW staff responded to their questions in a timely and satisfactory fashion.

messaging

# COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is fundamental to organizations, but in particular to organizations that exist in the political arena. In the many conversations with activists, the need for better communication came up repeatedly. In fact, over half (53%) of the party activists surveyed said the party did not receive adequate communication from RPW.

Opinions varied about where the deficiencies lay. There is room to improve on the intra-party communications. There were problems with the flow of information and materials that can be addressed, but there were also clear struggles with the attitude of campaign and RPW staff alike.

One person noted that RPW staff "...communicated well. The staff from the individual state candidates did an exceptionally poor job. Easy to confuse the two."

The appropriate role for the state party is something upon which we need to agree. Some members believe the RPW should have the role of helping campaigns coordinate messaging and serve as a clearinghouse for distributing printed materials. It was suggested that the Party even become equipped to do all the buying for campaign media efforts in order to save substantial resources in buyers' commissions. However, campaigns will surely take issue at this erosion of their usual responsibilities.

## INTRA-PARTY AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

There was a lot of discussion on printed materials and the availability of literature and signs. Some people felt like they didn't have enough printed material (or any literature at all) or it came too late. One county said they dumped a substantial amount

of printed campaign material a week after the election. Many people believe that the RPW should coordinate the delivery of all the signs and literature to offices at the same time.

And that's just the trouble with the printed material.

There was a definite thread of dissatisfaction about the communication between candidates, their campaigns and the grassroots. Some feel that they are taken for granted by the candidates once they're elected. Many people mentioned poor communications, rallies scheduled last-minute, last-minute cancellations of appearances, and the arrogance of staff who they contacted.

Again, whether it was Party staff or campaign staff remains unclear.

A couple of RPW field staff were mentioned as standouts. Many were unfairly caught in the middle when campaigns made last-minute requests for organized appearances, but others clearly needed more training on how to appropriately interact with local activists.

There is a clear desire to have a better website to improve information-sharing. People would like to have online access to training materials, policy background and talking points - something like the Chairman's Toolbox function that used to be available to local party leaders.

# COMMUNICATIONS

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Continued.

They want to have more information posted online - from schedules and the Chairman's letter, to contact information and bios for RPW and campaign staff. Many people asked for a newsletter - some wanted it quarterly, some wanted it every two weeks.

## CONNECTING WITH RPW

Grassroots want to connect with the State Party and with the campaigns. They want to suggest messaging, ask for information and assistance, and they want to build relationships.

One of the best suggestions to address these needs is also an easy thing to implement. RPW can host conference calls to do many of those things. For example, regular biweekly calls could help to address any problems in the field program that local leaders need to bring to attention.

Getting RPW, campaign, district and county representatives on the phone together more often could help in setting goals and tracking progress.

Part of the goal in this area should be setting clear expectations of services, duties and responsibilities of RPW. There are a lot of opinions on what the party should do – many of them in direct conflict with one another.

Clear expectations, even if they don't suit everyone, are important to keeping harmony.

## RAPID RESPONSE

Being sure that district and county members have the information they need to feel armed against attacks is vital.

This can be done in a number of ways such as the website and conference calls previously mentioned. But emails and push notifications can also be used to be sure that all the right information is available to members at the right time.

## MEDIA

Party members are looking for rapid response information, and they want to be in communication with their local media to serve on the front lines in pushing back against false information.

RPW can commit to providing media training to Executive Committee members and to counties, so they are able to be surrogates and get our message out.

We can recommit to pushing out letters to the editor. We should build relationships and make inroads with ethnic media outlets.

Key in this effort is being sure that information and talking points are available to our local activists.

RPW can be the point for coordinating a media team that includes our legislative campaign committees.

If we have information available, we can implement a media strategy and coordinate our message regionally and across the state.

It's important to create a culture of open communication. In part, that means being able to share and hear difficult things and work together to solve problems.

Sometimes staff attitude and training was a problem. Also, while it's important to remember Party leaders and activists are volunteers, sometimes they can make things difficult for staff assigned to their area.

But it's clear that in the past cycle there were problems that simmered and people who stewed because this kind of culture was not prioritized.

We can do better, and we must.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Set clear, appropriate expectations of RPW's role
- » Encourage better communication between candidates and local activists
- » Develop a more robust website including items like:
  - ◇ Chariman's Toolbox
  - ◇ Training
  - ◇ Schedules
  - ◇ Newsletters
  - ◇ Talking points and issue briefs
  - ◇ Contact information
  - ◇ Research having literature and sign requests coordinated on the RPW website to track outstanding requests and needs
- » Engage more with ethnic group media
- » Provide media training for local leadership and others
- » Use frequent conference calls to keep information flowing
- » Develop a media team to help with information and messaging
- » Nurture a culture of open communication to problem-solve and improve coordination

connecting

# 100%

## TRANSPARENCY

## NO DEBT

That's the goal of our course correction.

To meet that goal, RPW needs to stop overpaying, stop overspending, and start requiring stronger oversight.

# STATE PARTY FINANCES

The most immediate concerns facing the RPW are the cash flow problems and the debt we face. It's not insurmountable but it is substantial, and until it's fully addressed it will slow the implementation of nearly every other recommendation of this report.

So, an aggressive approach to fundraising is in order and already under way.

We thank Senator Ron Johnson, Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald for their already significant support of the RPW's efforts to correct the problem. We thank Governor Scott Walker for his commitment to partnering with us as well.

But the culture shift and lack of transparency and accountability that led us to this point bear examination.

Like most state parties with an incumbent governor, the operations of the party over time increasingly fell under the direction of the gubernatorial political operation. And in fact, in the wake of Act 10 and the recalls, the RPW benefitted from funds raised into the Party by Governor Walker. The higher state profile made fundraising much easier.

In the 2018 cycle, millions of dollars were raised into the Party by the governor's operation.

It is also true that in the month of October 2018 alone, over \$4 million was transferred from RPW to the governor's campaign, while at the same time the Party was making significant other expenditures on the campaign's behalf.

Over time, the structure of RPW moved away from that of a lean organization where in-house staff managed to the budget, to one where consultants were hired for many basic operational responsibilities at a much higher cost.

In leaner, more efficient days, contracting with consultants was done in a more limited, as-needed basis when services were necessary that could not be performed by RPW staff.

This troubling overreliance on high-cost consultants and providers was an expensive driver of our current debt.

# FINANCES

Continued.

## OVERPAYING

In calendar year 2018, a small handful of consultants were paid well over a half million dollars. Some of this group performed valuable and necessary functions appropriately contracted for externally.

However, some of the consultants were providing services that are appropriately and more economically performed in-house in other states. Still others had few, if any, discernible job responsibilities or expectations of deliverables.

Overpaying consultants, who worked outside the party structure and oversight, to perform functions that had in the past been done internally had two negative impacts.

First, it was the costly driver of the debt in which the Party currently finds itself. Second, it prevented RPW from building our farm team of future staff and young party leaders.

There is an element of a 'chicken or egg' factor that bears mentioning. In some cases, outside contractors were hired when in-house staff were unable to perform assigned duties.

Whether a failure in training, or a preference for paying consultants rather than hiring the right staff, the end result was overpaying for services.

## OVERSPENDING

The Governor's organization had raised significant resources to the RPW, but was provided additional resources by the RPW in the closing days of the campaign.

On top of the heavy burden of consultant spending, this proved more than the RPW could afford.

At the same time the party was accruing debt by financing campaign expenditures, it was also accruing debt by not paying its own bills.

While some services, particularly legal services and compliance reports, are appropriately managed by consultants, we must train RPW staff to again be able to perform basic operational duties.

## OVERSIGHT

As previously mentioned, there was little oversight of consultant contracts or spending, and even less transparency about this spending with the Chairman and Executive Committee.

There was little, if any, effort to explain the financial difficulties to Party leadership. Instead, questions about finances were deflected by pointing to a positive cash balance.

rebuilding

Yet cash on hand balances reflect myriad state and federal accounts - some of which have significant restrictions on how funds can be spent. A positive cash balance does not paint a clear or complete picture of the fiscal situation of the Party.

Over the past five years, the RPW Executive Committee put in place policies meant to prevent the kinds of actions we uncovered. These policies were apparently not followed.

The Executive Committee must be kept informed of operational realities.

### AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

**Reporting to the FEC and state Elections Commission has been completed in a timely manner and in compliance with all requirements. Campaign finance laws were followed and the RPW does not face any state or federal compliance problems. Many states are not so fortunate. Campaign finance laws are complex, and cash flow problems are not always readily apparent on finance reports.**

## GETTING OVER IT

Simply put, the consultant-driven culture was financially burdensome and entirely unsustainable now that we no longer have an incumbent governor.

We are correcting the practices that led us to this point, and recommitting to transparency and accountability to the Executive Committee and the county parties, especially after an election cycle where the GOP came up short.

The party has made a course correction. Consultants who are not providing needed services have been let go.

Retiring the debt will be challenging in this environment, yet this is when resources are needed the most. Rebuilding must take place.

Grassroots organizing doesn't start in an election year. It happens now.

The successful 2019 Supreme Court race demonstrated just how important successful grassroots organizing can be.

This report does not seek to assign blame – doing so will not help retire the debt, correct problems, unite our party, or prepare us for 2020. All involved were working for a cause that no one wanted to see fall short, and these problems can be corrected going forward.

But to do so, we need to understand the missteps fully and put a flag in the ground to say 'this ends now.'

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- » Develop a vendor and consultant contract approval process
- » Train staff to manage basic party functions to reduce the need to hire outside vendors
- » Real-time management of accounts payable
- » Create a policy for credit card usage
- » Develop accountability processes for department heads to follow
- » Update policy manual to clarify processes for expenditure approval, travel reimbursements, and delineate responsibility for expenditures made outside the established process
- » End of cycle audits and timely quarterly financial statements issued

# MOVING FORWARD: 2020 STRATEGY

Our loss of the statewide contests has generated Monday morning quarterbacking from all corners and there's not solid agreement on what happened.

Some feel that there is too much focus on the WOW counties to the detriment of small and rural areas. Others felt that the WOW didn't get enough attention and that is the reason for our losses. Some thought we didn't talk about union-busting enough, some thought that the talk of unions really hurt in their area.

This cycle saw turnout about 10% above the last midterm. Record turnout and emerging dynamics seen in states across the nation – erosion of support in traditional suburban strongholds, and a renewal in more rural areas – created a somewhat changed environment. Our close gubernatorial and AG races remain painful, but there are lessons to take away.

## TURN OUT YOUR VOTERS, WIN OVER THE SWING

If the Walker campaign had turned out just 15 more people in each town, city and village, the election would have been ours. The highest priority of the Republican Party must be turning out our voters through grassroots mobilization.

But turnout of Republican voters was not the only problem, or even the most significant problem of 2018. For the first time in years, Republicans lost swing voters in the race for

governor. Any honest discussion of what cost Republicans victories in 2018 must acknowledge that the loss of independent swing voters hurt as much or more than Democrats turning out their base voters.

Wisconsin Republicans have enjoyed significant advantages with independent voters since the 2010 cycle. Those advantages were lost in 2018.

As noted by Craig Gilbert of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (MJS 1-7-2019):

“Walker’s average approval rating among independents averaged 50 percent from 2012 to 2014, fell to 36 percent from 2015 to 2016, lingered in the low 40s for much of 2018, and finally crept back up to the mid-40s last fall, according to polling data provided by Charles Franklin, who conducts the Marquette poll. But that was still well short of the ratings he got in his first term.”

Walker lost independents November 6 for the first time in his four races, according to exit polling.”

“WITHOUT DATA, YOU’RE JUST ANOTHER PERSON WITH AN OPINION.”

W. EDWARDS DEMING

TURN OUT EVERY

GOP VOTER

In the first midterm election since Wisconsin implemented Photo ID, our voter turnout reached a record high.

So much for the Democrats’ argument that showing ID would depress turnout.

smarter

# STRATEGY

Continued.

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The political landscape and individual candidate appeal have undeniable influence on our performance with swing voters. But we have a role to play as well. It involves data, organizing and building relationships with voters.

We will partner with the RNC to provide the most advanced data and field tools ever provided to activists.

That data will be used to identify medium and low propensity GOP voters with a grassroots army focused on getting them to the polls. Door to door contact will be the preferred method, but not the only method. Data matters, but so do people.

We'll build relationships with swing voters to win them back to the GOP by pointing out that the Party continues to fight for the issues they care about.

We will partner with the Trump Victory campaign to carry Wisconsin once again in 2020. Together, we'll develop more relationships with voters and make more voter contacts than ever before. But we need to compliment their data, metrics driven approach to volunteer mobilization by giving our grassroots volunteers additional tools they need to be successful. Training of county parties and activists are just one of the ways we can compliment the national Victory effort. What follows are a few more ways we can be helpful at the state party level.

## YOU'RE NOT ALONE: OFFICES AND SIGNS

The national field effort has moved away from traditional volunteer offices, but Wisconsin activists find them important.

Team building, distribution and call centers, and the knowledge that the Republican Party is active throughout the state are all diminished when offices are no longer available, and grassroots production suffers.

State party-funded offices in key Wisconsin cities in each congressional district, and development of strong county parties that make office space available to their volunteers must be a priority for the RPW.

Activists rarely feel they have sufficient supplies of yard signs. Yet mentioning yard signs always gets eyerolls from professional operatives. The old adage that 'signs don't vote' is true.

But because the left has developed a strategy of bullying and intimidation, we live in a time when people are afraid to publicly acknowledge they support President Trump. Yard signs can be a useful tool in building support by showing folks that it's ok to come outside—especially in southeast Wisconsin, where margins have become smaller in recent cycles.

We must make resources available to supply activists with a sufficient supply of signs to show enthusiasm on the ground, throughout the state. Some county parties have bought signs on their own, including Waukesha and others. Some industrious county parties, like Washington, wanted to show their enthusiasm for Judge Hagedorn by making homemade signs to further catch voters' attention. It may not be viewed as the centerpiece of a modern campaign, but that type of enthusiasm is infectious and should be encouraged rather than ridiculed.

## WINNING THE DATA GAME

We used to lament that the Dems had better data, more data and that they knew how to use it better. Now, even Democrats admit that Republicans have surpassed them in the quality, depth and application of our data.

But it can always be improved. Same day registration, no party registration, and decentralization of election administration make Wisconsin a tough state to ensure data accuracy.

There is more we can do to compliment the extensive efforts of the RNC, as the Walker led team has done in the past. The election results from the fall, and the Supreme Court race will help us in that effort. Additional spot tests of the accuracy of voter data at the state level, even beyond that already done nationally, will make an even better product for candidates up and down the ballot.

At times county parties and volunteers have made changes to individual records and addresses only to have them overwritten when statewide lists are updated. The process has been corrected recently, but sporadic reports are still heard and we must be vigilant that manual updates are permanently preserved.

## WE'RE A MELTING POT

RPW currently has two staff focused on organizing in minority communities, with an emphasis on the Hispanic and African American communities. We need to go into more areas.

We will be teaming up with the RNC to continue to improve our efforts and develop best practices.

We'll use metrics and meet goals for engagement.

But we'll also simply take the time to listen.

We remain committed to the knowledge that we agree more than we disagree. We can increase our support in these and other ethnic communities over time in ways that justify the current investment despite the state party's limited number of staff.

## RECOMMENDATION:

Create a metrics-driven plan, work with and compliment the Trump Campaign's efforts to organize on the ground and drive turnout. It will benefit not only national and statewide candidates, but local and legislative candidates.

Help make it safe to outwardly support the President, and use our recognized superiority in data to implement a strategy that re-elects our President and benefits our local and legislative candidates.

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## GOP ASSEMBLY, SENATE,

## CONGRESS & US SENATE SEATS

We have a strong foundation on which to rebuild, and we should count ourselves lucky – most states can only imagine having so many past and present Party leaders and elected officials of such national prominence.

Wisconsin has had a remarkable number of Republican leaders guiding our Party, our state and our nation. Their continued commitment to the Republican Party of Wisconsin is invaluable.

# SUCCESSSES

## CONCLUSION: WE HAVE MANY ASSETS...

We've definitely got room to improve.

But we also have so much to build on. This report would not be complete without an accounting of our many assets.

- ◇ Our Grassroots are phenomenal. They are engaged and battle-tested.
- ◇ Years of innovative, GOP-led reforms, national attention and of course the recalls have built a team of activists who understand what's at stake. They want to be engaged.
- ◇ We are right on the issues. The past eight years of GOP control in Wisconsin have produced a strong economy, low unemployment, prosperity, and lower taxes.
- ◇ Wisconsin has a strong tradition of volunteerism, no more evident than in our committed Republican Party volunteers.
- ◇ We have a now long-standing national profile and we're again set to be center stage for the 2020 presidential race.
- ◇ We have strong county leadership.
- ◇ We have a history of success – we know how to win.
- ◇ We're a purple state of people who are open to being persuaded.
- ◇ We have great elected officials, and strong majorities in the state legislature.
- ◇ We have a strong volunteer base, conditioned to see the value in voter contact.
- ◇ We have had - and still have - many quality staff, some entry-level and some with specialized skills, looking to be a part of a strong organization fighting alongside elected officials they believe in.

# ...AND WE HAVE IDEAS

Far more than could be included in this document, which is intended to be a starting point for further discussion. These ideas have been presented to the Republican Party of Wisconsin's Executive Committee, and will be assigned to its related committees for further review and deliberations.

The ideas and the plans mentioned here will be subject to change as the political landscape and resources change. The goals listed in this document are intended to be updated continually, but we believe provide our supporters with a much more clear view of the challenges we face, the opportunities that lie ahead, and the plans we have to meet them.

Rather than be measured against the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, to which we believe the RPW compares quite favorably, the Party is often measured against all of the activity put forth by the left. The Greater Wisconsin Committee, One Wisconsin Now and now Eric Holder's National Democratic Redistricting Committee are just a few of the entities designed and active in the effort to attack Republicans.

And less obvious, but perhaps nearly as partisan, Democratic front-groups such as the League of

Conservation Voters, Citizen Action, League of Women Voters, and Common Cause, to name just a few, provide the left with resources to organize grassroots and their friends in the media at levels that hard dollar political parties simply cannot.

The Republican Party of Wisconsin is at the hub of the center right movement in Wisconsin, and has a responsibility to be as effective as possible to advance it here. We have our share of challenges, but we will rebuild together. Compared to today's high-priced TV ads, cultivating grassroots activism provides a tremendous return on investment, and no one remains better positioned to do it than the RPW.

We renew our commitment to working with like-minded individuals and groups, along with the grassroots activists that make up this Party, to win victories for Republican candidates for years to come.