**Democrats move quickly to back Harris**

By WisPolitics.com

Days after Wisconsin Republicans united at their convention in Milwaukee behind Donald Trump, Wisconsin Democrats quickly rallied behind Vice President Kamala Harris after President Joe Biden dropped out and endorsed her.

Top state elected Democrats quickly endorsed her. And state Party Chair Ben Wikler reported on July 22 -- the day before Harris' visit to West Allis -- that all but a handful of delegates to the mid-August Democratic National Convention in Chicago had pledged to support Harris.

A jubilant crowd roared for Harris' jabs at Trump and her declarations that "we are not going back.'' She said America under a new Trump administration will descend into "chaos, fear and hate.'' She said her campaign is about the future and freedom.  "Are we ready to fight for it? When we fight, we win,'' Harris said.

Democrats noted the enthusiastic surge.

“There is a surge of focus, of enthusiasm, of a kind of flowering, of the kind of unity that we’re going to need to defeat Donald Trump and that we are absolutely going to have,” Wikler said. “Like so many Democrats, I have profound gratitude for President Biden’s service to our country and his leadership. I honor a decision that must have been unimaginably challenging to reach.”

State GOP spokesperson Matt Fisher in a statement said while Democrats may have a new candidate, they’re still offering “failed policies.”

“With their support for Kamala Harris, Wisconsin Democrats are admitting they have nothing to offer voters other than a different name with the same failed policies,” Fisher said. “Wisconsinites see through the charade and are ready to turn the page on the dysfunction of the Biden-Harris Administration.”

Wikler said Harris, who is 59, can make Trump’s age and readiness to serve a liability in the race. The former president turned 78 years old in June.

“This is a reset in the presidential election, and we have the upper hand,” Wikler said.

Gov. Tony Evers in a statement called Harris “a tenacious leader who has vigorously defended our democracy, fought to protect the freedoms we hold dear, and worked tirelessly to do the right thing and deliver for us.”

Evers earlier thanked Biden for his service.

“President Biden is a leader who’s always chosen unity over division, people over politics, selflessness over selfishness, and decency and respect over cruelty and retribution, and that’s as evident today as it has been throughout each day of his decades of public service,” Evers said. “I’ve been proud and honored to support him, and I’m incredibly grateful for all the work we’ve been able to do together. Thank you, Mr. President.”

Speaking at a July 22 press conference at Milwaukee Area Technical College celebrating the state’s designation as a U.S. Regional Tech Hub, Evers grew emotional while discussing Biden’s decision.

“He is a good friend,” he said. “He’s done a lot for this country.”

Baldwin, D-Madison, has avoided saying in recent weeks whether she believed Biden should continue his campaign after a much-criticized June 27 debate performance. She several times said she had relayed concerns she heard from constituents to Biden’s campaign and the White House, but she declined to join the calls for him to step aside ahead of Sunday’s announcement.

Following Biden’s announcement, Baldwin said it had been an honor to work with him on issues such as health care and infrastructure. She then quickly endorsed Harris.

“I look forward to her candidacy as a new beginning for our party and our country and I am excited to work with her to lower costs for Wisconsin families, grow our Made in America economy, and restore our fundamental rights and freedoms,” Baldwin said.

At the MATC press conference, Baldwin touted Biden’s “lifetime of commitment to his country,” and said he “continued in his role as patriot” by dropping out of the race. She also said he didn’t wait too long to drop out, in response to a reporter’s question.

“He said early on in his first administration that he wanted to be a bridge to the next generation,” she said. “He’s making that so. And there’s a new beginning, and I’m very excited.”

GOP U.S. Senate candidate Eric Hovde said Baldwin did nothing while other Dems called on Biden to step aside.

“She stayed on the sidelines, dodging reporters and refusing to stand up for Wisconsinites,” Hovde said. “She’s been friends with President Biden for decades and never once told us about his obvious problems. We need to know right now – how long has Tammy Baldwin been part of the Biden cover-up?”

*The Capitol Report is written by editorial staff at WisPolitics.com, a nonpartisan, Madison-based news service that specializes in coverage of government and politics and is distributed for publication by members of the Wisconsin Newspaper Association.*

Copyright © WisPolitics.com