WISPOLITICS: Democrats focus on work ahead

By WisPolitics

Wisconsin Dems at the DNC spent four days in Chicago basking in the excitement of seeing new momentum with Kamala Harris and Tim Walz at the top of the ticket.

Now they’re aiming to convert that excitement into energy that will fuel victories up and down the ballot.

“This campaign has already been shot out of a rocket. Now it's entering warp speed,” Wisconsin Democratic Party Chair Ben Wikler said. “I didn't know they had afterburners on this rocket, but you can see the energy that's gonna propel this campaign all the way through to the finish line.”

However, he emphasized that the winning margin in the presidential race could be very narrow. He declared Wisconsin Democrats would need to work hard and campaign “in every square inch of our state,” including in rural areas.

Four of the past six presidential campaigns in Wisconsin have been decided by less than 23,000 votes each.

Wikler said Wisconsin Democrats would use a “surround sound” strategy, where voters would hear about candidates from multiple messengers.

“Voters are going to hear from a state legislative candidate who knocks on their door, from a volunteer who knocks on the door, from a text message they get from a friend,” Wikler said. “They're going to see… a unified message about freedom and opportunity and joy and hope.”

State GOP Chair Brian Schimming argued voters aren’t going to forget Dems’ record on inflation and the border just because they’re emerging from the national convention with some positive feelings.

“While rosy vibes and empty platitudes may excite a liberal audience in Chicago, working families in Wisconsin deserve actual substance and policy from their candidates,” Schimming said. “The sugar-high honeymoon for Democrats coming out of their convention will inevitably run headfirst into the unforgiving reality of their abysmal record.”

Sarah Godlewski, Wisconsin secretary of state, said Harris and Walz understand how to win over Wisconsinites despite the high likelihood of a close race.

“So the one thing that we know is that you can't take your foot off the gas in our state. So how do you do that? You got to meet folks where they are,” Godlewski said. “I think that's a real big differentiator to me, is how Tim Walz and Kamala Harris are meeting Wisconsinites where they are. They're listening. They're showing up and showing that they care.”

Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway said the [high turnout](https://apnews.com/article/wisconsin-election-turnout-senate-24ac974d995a286fb79eb9a277e8435e) in the August primaries was a reflection of the excitement around the new Dem ticket but warned Dems not to be complacent.

“We have a little bit of momentum going on. Now, we don't want to take it for granted. We got to do the work,” Rhodes-Conway said.

She added that she wanted to see high turnout not only in the highly liberal city of Madison, but throughout Wisconsin.

“Everybody should vote,” Rhodes-Conway said. “I think we have a motivated community. I think we're going to see really high turnout, and I think that's the way it should be, everywhere.”

Sheboygan Mayor Ryan Sorenson, who was a delegate to the convention, said he didn’t think Democrats were overconfident coming out of the convention.

“I think it's excitement. I think there's momentum,” Sorenson said, adding that the new ticket with Harris and Walz was bringing new energy to the state.

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