

Republicans Attempt to Turn Back the Clock, But There is More Work to Do

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Thanks to a lot of hard work we have a new Governor, Attorney General and State Treasurer, we won the statewide vote, but gerrymandering has left the GOP in control of the legislature. No time to waste feeling bad, the next major election is upon us.

GREEN BAY, WI - On November 6th the voters chose real change for our state after 8 years of Governor Walker and the Republican agenda.

It was part of one of the biggest electoral waves in our nation's history.

In congress Democrats are poised to pick up 40 seats in the house. That is the 3rd largest gain in recent history, second only to the Republicans gains in 2010 and 2014.

But it was the biggest margin of victory in total votes in any mid-term election in history. Democrats received over 9 million more votes than Republicans and the 8.1% percent margin is bigger than any recent midterm including the GOP wins of 1994, 2010 and 2014. It even surpassed the Democrats' wave in 2006.

And it all came in a mid-term election in which turnout itself was historic. In Wisconsin nearly 2.7 million people, or 60% of registered voters turned out. According to the New York Times, approximately 114 million votes were cast in U.S. House races in 2018, compared to 83 million in 2014. That compares to just 36.7 percent in 2014, and 41 percent in 2010.

So what votes in Wisconsin accomplished is truly impressive. Thanks to a lot of hard work we have a new Governor, new Attorney General and new State Treasurer. We should all be happy and proud of that.

So it is naturally disappointing that soon-to-be former Governor Scott Walker (Did I mention he lost?) and the Republicans in the Legislature once again showed their true colors by using a lame duck session Tuesday night to strip power from Governor-elect Evers and Attorney General-elect Kaul. Their actions are repugnant and a slap in the face not only to the majority of voters who chose a new, more progressive direction for our state, but to the spirit of democracy and the peaceful transition of power as well.

I've spoken to people who are disheartened by this. Especially after all the hard work leading up to the lame duck session making calls, sending emails and helping organize others to do the same to try to stop them from their egregious assault on our state's valued democratic traditions.



And while I, too, am angry and frustrated I am also happy and proud at the effort made by those who stood up to Walker and the Republicans. You might not realize it but your voices made a difference.



A day after Tony Evers was elected Republican Speaker Robin Vos vowed to limit his veto authority. There were rumors that they would try to eliminate the ability Governor's to veto any unfair maps the GOP produces during redistricting (an issue very close to my heart!). They

were even talking about moving the 2020 presidential primary in order to protect Dan Kelly, a Republican justice on the State Supreme Court who is coming up for reelection.

But none of that happened. And even though changes to other bills were minor, your efforts caused them great concern. We were supposed to go to the floor to debate their schemes at 11:00 a.m. that morning. 17 hours later we were still waiting for the Republicans to quit arguing amongst themselves and come back to the floor.

One of the results was their failure to pass a bill they claimed would protect people with pre-existing conditions if their lawsuit to end the Affordable Care Act is successful. But, it was a bill in name only that would not only not provide any real protection, it would also increase insurance premiums on everyone else.

That in and of itself is a major victory that everyone who saw through their charade can be proud in having helped stop.

Progressives and anyone who wants to see our state truly move forward should appreciate the fact that things are changing. Your voice really does make a difference, both at the ballot box and during the legislative process.

But we're not done yet. The next major election is upon us. It is the election to fill the Supreme Court seat of retiring Justice Shirley Abrahamson. She is truly one of the great jurists in our state's history and possibly the nation. She will be sorely missed, but in April we will have the chance to elect her successor.

And in 2020 we will have the chance to finally end Republican control of the State Supreme Court.

But, it all starts now. There is no time to waste feeling bad about what happened at 7:00 a.m. Wednesday morning. Instead we should recognize that our voices and efforts can and have made and get to work making Justice Abrahamson proud by making sure her replacement lives up to the high standards she set for the Court.

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