

THE **D**EMOCRATIC VOICE

March 2021 Newsletter

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Let's tell the truth about the Republican Party: It's the real enemy of the people

By Chauncey DeVega of Salon as condensed by Dave Wulf
Chauncey DeVeg

With this most recent vote to acquit Trump for his obvious crimes, the Republican Party has become a de facto terrorist organization that embraces the use of political violence by members of the white right against Democrats, liberals, progressives and any other group or individual deemed to be the enemy.

Trump's first impeachment was for his attempt to extort the government of Ukraine to aid him in the 2020 presidential election by launching a fake investigation of Joe Biden. As a preview of that behavior, Trump and his inner circle colluded with Russian agents to undermine the 2016 presidential election. As revealed by the Mueller report and the U.S. Senate investigations, Trump and his agents went on to commit other crimes, including obstruction of justice, in order to conceal their obvious guilt in the Russia scandal.

Donald Trump won that time too: He established the precedent that Republicans can break the law — up to and including illicit aid from hostile foreign countries — to meddle with elections without fear of punishment or other consequences.

In these and other ways, the Republican Party and the broader right-wing movement have shown the American people and the world that they are anti-democratic, anti-majoritarian, fascist and authoritarian. They are enemies of multiracial democracy and pluralism, and committed to winning power and holding it by any means necessary and at any cost.

Trump has shown himself to be a sociopath, perhaps even a psychopath.

Upcoming Events



Monday, March 1: Monthly Executive Board Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/94686543184?pwd=RnRCVUdUVGVHQQ092VkJ2SXBMd0FCZz09>

Monday, March 15: Monthly General Meeting Featuring Tom Nelson, announced Candidate for 2022 Wisconsin Senate and other elected officials. Register in advance for this meeting: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAtcu6vrDwjHNEicIsT7jEjouY9MlzREYgc>

Monday, March 22: 2021 Exploration of Racism Discussion Group and Book Club Register at laxdems.com/2021bookclub

He is incapable of shame. Trump leads a political cult. Polling data shows that he is far more popular than the Republican Party as a whole. Republicans in Congress are loyal to him, either out of fear or because they share his vision. Nearly all of them voted for nearly all of Trump's policies. By implication, they are part of a sociopathic political party and movement. Trump's followers are definitely not ashamed of him. They believe that he and by extension they are noble "patriots" who are being victimized by "political correctness" and the intolerant or "socialist" left in general.

Another narrative holds that "history is watching" and that impeaching Trump a second time set an important precedent. But Republicans and Trump supporters do not care about the "truth" or the abstract judgment of history. Their

commandments are victory and power by any means. Today's American right wing understands that history is a malleable thing, which in many ways is written by the victors.

As with other fascists and authoritarians, today's Republican Party lives in a type of eternal present. They may speak of "tradition" and a return to some idyllic, fictive past of "greatness" and "glory," but those are just linguistic devices deployed to achieve victory by destroying existing societal institutions and norms.

Most of the Republican Party's leaders and voters continue to support Donald Trump. Those Republicans who dared to vote in support of impeaching and convicting Donald Trump are being censured and otherwise punished by the party. Any and all Republican elected officials who oppose Trump face the real possibility of losing their seats at the next election.

Trump's second impeachment and Joe Biden's election have led ... the hope-peddlers and professional centrists in the news media ... to throw the Age of Trump down the memory hole. So we are told that "tens of thousands" of registered Republicans are supposedly fleeing the party because of Donald Trump. Such joy is misplaced and unearned. A temporary move by a few thousand potential voters away from the Republican Party does not mean they will then become Democrats. Those same voters will likely come back to the Republican Party, sooner rather than later. Even assuming the most generous reading — that Trump will damage the Republican Party in the 2022 midterms, the 2024 presidential election and beyond — Republican elected officials are largely immune to the pressures of public opinion because they have used gerrymandering, voter suppression and other means to solidify their power and remain in office.

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Many opinion leaders, as well as average Americans, ... are naive about the true nature of the Republican Party, Trumpism and the right more generally. **The Republican Party and right-wing movement do not believe in real democracy.** Their policies are anti-democratic and antisocial. Democratic norms, values and traditions are but a way of getting and keeping power. Once power is won by Republicans and other members of the right, democracy is dismantled — whether piece by piece, or all at once — in service to authoritarianism, fascism, white supremacy, Christian fascism and gangster capitalism. In such a failing democracy, "bipartisanship," "consensus" and "unity" are polite ways of announcing one's surrender.

Once again, the Republican Party has proven itself to be a uniquely dangerous political organization. But our mainstream American news media primarily speaks for the powerful and not the powerless, too often prizes access over truth-telling. ... For them to tell the truth about today's Republican Party is a bridge too far. For the sake of the country and the world, let us hope that at least some major figures in the media find some courage. Such courage begins with acknowledging what the Republican Party truly represents: As Donald Trump was so fond of saying, it is "the enemy of the people."

Make your voice heard within the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. Become a Delegate to the 3rd CD and State DPW Conventions!

Delegates vote for party leadership, changes to Constitution and By-Laws of the Party and work to steer the platform and direction of the party. The more delegates from the La Crosse area, the more say we will have in policy at the state and federal level.

Who can be a Delegate?

Anyone 18 years or older on or before November 3, 2020. A resident of Wisconsin and citizen of the United States. A registered voter in the district which they are running. Someone who supports the values of the Democratic Party
Note: Democratic Party of Wisconsin Membership is not required but is suggested.

The 3rd CD Convention will be held on May 8 and will be entirely virtual. The exact time and agenda are being finalized but will include election of 3rd CD Officers and votes on changes to the 3rd CD Constitution and By-Laws.

The State Convention will be held June 5 & 6. The State Convention will probably also be 100% virtual but the final determination is still being made.

Please contact William Garcia at chair@laxdems.com if you would like to be a delegate for the 3rd CD and/or the DPW State Convention.



The La Crosse Democratic party and the Democratic Party of Wisconsin Endorse Progressive Public Schools Champion Dr. Jill Underly

Tuesday's primary made one thing very clear: **there is one true progressive public schools champion in the race for State Superintendent, and that's Dr. Jill Underly.** That's why the Wisconsin Democrats were proud to endorse her campaign to become our next Superintendent at the Department of Public Instruction, a job once held by our own Gov. Tony Evers. Dr. Underly has more than two decades of public education experience, and has served kids pre-kindergarten through college, as a teacher, a principal, a mentor, and a district superintendent.

The stakes in this race are clear. As Chair Wikler said in the statement announcing the endorsement:

"Our schools are at a crossroads. The pandemic has disrupted learning for all students, and it has exacerbated long-standing opportunity gaps that harm students of color, rural students, and students from lower-income families. We need a leader with the vision to not just reopen schools safely, but to build them back better, fairer, and more equitable than ever before. We have no doubt that Dr. Jill Underly is that leader."

Dr. Jill Underly is the public school champion our kids deserve, and we look forward to helping folks across Wisconsin cast their ballots and elect her on April 6.

Invite a FRIEND

to join the La Crosse County Democratic Party!

The LCDP needs help preparing for the crucial 2022 election to keep Tony Evers as Governor and defeat Senator Ron Johnson. We need your help recruiting new members. For just \$25 a year (\$35 for a Pairs membership or \$10 for students/limited income), your friends can invest in the caring, progressive community Wisconsin deserves. Visit <https://laxdems.com/join-the-party/> to sign up!

A Perfect Storm

by LCDP Executive Board member Ed Burgess

Once upon the time there was an old farmer who had worked his crops for many years. One day his horse ran away. Upon hearing the news, his neighbors came to visit. "Such bad luck," they said sympathetically. "Maybe," the farmer replied. The next morning the horse returned, bringing with it three other wild horses. "How wonderful," the neighbors exclaimed. "Maybe," replied the old man. The following day, his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses, was thrown, and broke his leg. The neighbors again came to offer their sympathy on his misfortune. "Maybe," answered the farmer. The day after, military officials came to the village to draft young men into the army. Seeing that the son's leg was broken, they passed him by. The neighbors congratulated the farmer on how well things had turned out. "Maybe," said the farmer.

Sometimes, in the moment, we lack the understanding of events without the passage of time. I, like most of you, was horrified by the election of Donald Trump. I perceived, correctly, that here was a man who was not at all qualified to be president and worse, had demonstrated severe deficiencies of character. Over time I began to see that as damaging as he was to our government, there was a silver lining. If we managed to hang on, I perceived the harm that he was doing to the Republican party. By controlling a large swath of voters, he turned Republican legislators in Washington into a bunch of sycophants. They were willing to turn a blind eye to the worst of Trump's actions for the sake of power and 'winning'. No longer were they interested in good governance, they simply wanted to hang onto their seats. To be sure, the Republican party had been going down a dark path starting with Reagan. He was a master of the racist dog whistle. He also sowed distrust in the power of the government to be an agent of good. Republicans since

have stood over the gears of government with a bucket of sand. They harnessed the anger of ordinary Americans who felt left behind. Instead of finding legislative solutions they simply channeled that anger against those they perceived as their adversaries. With the use of clever rhetoric and a willingness to use questionable, unethical tactics to win elections, they maneuvered themselves into the winner's circle. Newt Gingrich's take no prisoners attitude was indicative of their core values. Mitch McConnell has led them to become the party of 'no' with no good solutions to the ills of the nation.

Now they are reaping the results of their style of governance. My son was long concerned about the direction of our government under Trump. I kept telling him that, in the long run, we might emerge stronger in the end. Even before the COVID crisis, I began telling him that we might be looking at a perfect storm that would cause Trump and the Republican party to tumble onto the rocks. To be sure, presently, Democrats have an unsure grasp of the levers of government. The damage to the Republican party is still playing out. They are for sure leaking people of conscience. They still have a loyal core and they are working hard to craft voter legislation that will allow their minority to remain in control. I think that this is a losing strategy. I believe that if the Republican party wants to be relevant in the future, they need to reinvent themselves.

As Democrats we need to focus on the work at hand to propel our party into a solid majority. Much will be revealed by the outcomes of future elections. We must do the hard work that is incumbent on people who incorporate the qualities of empathy and truth. My dream is of a golden sunrise after the storm that will allow leaders of good will to move us forward to a period of good governance that will allow ordinary Americans to enjoy all the benefits of being members of a free society with opportunity for all.



**EXECUTIVE
BOARD
SPOTLIGHT**

Ed Burgess

At-large Board Member



My father worked for the State Department as a career diplomat. My youth was spent living in various countries and Washington D.C. I graduated from the University

of Maryland with a degree in history. I subsequently worked at the Museum of African Art before being recruited to work for a small construction company. I had a remodeling business for 10 years before moving to Holmen with my wife and son. We were later blessed with the addition of twin girls. I joined the carpenters union and worked for a design/build company in La Crosse for over 20 years. I ran several multi million dollar projects as well as serving as the quality control manager for a couple more. My work took me all over Minnesota and Wisconsin. I spent a year in Oklahoma before retiring. I am a progressive with strong appreciation for the Democratic Party as an agent of good government. I see the pendulum swinging and am eager to be a part of the resurgence of our Party here in Wisconsin and in Washington.

Join one of LCDP's Standing Committees!

Want to be more involved with La Crosse County Democrats? Consider joining one of our committees. These committees work to ensure that LCDP is ready to help elect progressive candidates in our region. Contact William Garcia at chair@laxdems.com if you have any questions or to sign up for a group.

Candidate Recruitment: Charged with identifying and recruiting viable candidates for various positions within local, state and national government.

Communications: Charged with crafting the party message, coordinating dissemination efforts and getting LTEs, radio call ins, electronic media use.

Rationale: Dissemination of material for external audiences involves writing / speaking about material. The other responsibility is the technical IT work maintaining social media.

Community Outreach (including Labor): Charged with enhancing relationships with various segments of the community and generating interest in the LCDP and our activities; includes the Labor Outreach Committee, which establishes and maintains a relationship with unions to set up legal communications during election years.

Constitution and By-Laws: Responsible for maintaining the C&B, following approved procedures for amendments, when deemed constitutionally necessary

Fund Raising: Charged with planning and staging various fundraising events, currently 3 members. Often works closely with the Events Committee, which sometimes overlaps into fundraising

Events: Responsible for planning, staging, and encouraging participation in events to publicize the LCDP and disseminating the party message and establish the party brand. Examples include but are not limited to Progesstival in February, June picnic, July Interstate Fair, Fall Dinner, issue events, etc.

Membership: Tasked with maintaining and building the membership of the LCDP. Membership has a dual function. One is internal – working with current members and lapsed members. The other is establishing relationships to the larger community via outreach,



Our Elected Officials

Governor Tony Evers

Office of the Governor
115 East State Capital
Madison, WI 53702
Ph: 608-266-1212

Senator Tammy Baldwin

717 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510
Ph: 202-224-5653, Fax: 202-224-9787

Senator Ron Johnson (R)

328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. Office Building
Ph: 202-224-5323

Congressman Ron Kind

1406 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Ph: 202-225-5506, Fax: 202-225-5739

32nd District State Senator Brad Pfaff

State Capitol 22 South
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707
Ph: 608-266-5490, Sen.Pfaff@legis.wisconsin.gov

94th Assembly District Representative Steve Doyle

Room 124 North, State Capitol
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708
Ph: 608-266-0631 or 888-534-0094
Fax: 608-282-3694

95th Assembly District Representative Jill Billings

Room 4 West, State Capitol
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708
Ph: 608-266-5780

La Crosse County Clerk

Ginny Dankmeyer (Democrat)
(608) 785-9581

La Crosse County District Attorney

Tim Gruenke (Democrat)
(608) 785-9604

La Crosse County Treasurer

Amy Twitchell (Democrat)
(608) 785-9711

LCDP Executive Board Officers

Chair: William Garcia

608-769-5286

Vice Chair: David Wulf

608-799-8977

Treasurer: Merry Kocar

608-512-5253

Secretary: Diane Wulf

608-780-7007

Past Chair: Michael Smuksta

At-Large Board Members:

Terry Benson

Ed Burgess

Fred Giese

Ralph Knudson

Ron Malzer

College Representative: Jenna Dinkel (UW-L)

dinkel4642@uwlax.edu

Follow the LCDP on



twitter

@lacrossedems

and



Instagram

@lacrossedems

Posting of Unapproved Minutes

A couple of LCDP members have expressed an interest in receiving regular minutes prior to the next regular LCP meeting. If you want to receive the minutes early, please contact lcdpwi@gmail.com or 608-769-5286. A PDF of the minutes with an UNAPPROVED watermark will be sent to you. No hard copies will be sent.

Some Facts On Your LCDP Membership

The best and easiest way to renew your La Crosse County Democratic Party membership is through your local county treasurer. Once you are a member of the county, you are automatically a member of the 3rd Congressional District (3rd CD) and the Democratic Party of Wisconsin (DPW). You need to submit membership dues only once a year to be a member of all three. It is unnecessary to submit duplicate memberships through the county and also through the state. If you have questions about your membership, please contact lcdpwi@gmail.com or 608-769-5286.

We Welcome Your Input

Any thoughts or suggestions you may have for your Executive Board are greatly appreciated. You can express them by contacting any board member, either by phone or email.

Renewing Your Membership!

You can renew your membership using the membership form found at the end of this newsletter. If you are receiving this newsletter via mail, please look at your mailing label to see when your membership expires. Thank you for your continued support!

If you are receiving this newsletter in the mail and would prefer to receive it via email instead, please contact lcdpwi@gmail.com or 608-769-5286.

La Crosse County Democratic Party



LaxDems.com

As the LCDP prepares for 2021 and beyond, your membership and participation are more important than ever. Your membership fees help fund the LCDP office and infrastructure, community outreach, candidate recruitment and campaign assistance up and down the ballot. Membership also gives you a voice in the operations and policy of the Wisconsin Democratic Party and the National Democratic Party platform. There is always a need for volunteers, and we can always find a way for you to help.

You may send a contribution to: LCDP, P. O. Box 1861, La Crosse, WI, 54602-1861. For online contributions go to our website www.laxdems.com.

Thank you.

There are three ways to join through the LCDP:

- 1. Print and mail your check and the form (available also at tinyurl.com/lcdpmbform)
2. Visit laxdems.com/join-the-party and complete your application and payment online.
3. Come to a LCDP event and complete the process and payment in person.

Please check the dues structure that applies:

- \$10 Senior, Student, Limited Income
\$25 General Membership (1 member)
\$35 Pairs (up to two members)
\$45 yearly Activist (up to 3 members)
\$75 yearly (family)
\$120 Supporting Membership
\$240 Friend
\$600 Patron

I would like to support the LCDP with a donation of \$_____

Total Amount Paid \$_____

Make checks payable to:

La Crosse County Democratic Party
P. O. Box 1861
La Crosse, WI 54602-1861

You may also donate online: www.laxdems.com.

Paid for by the La Crosse County Democratic Party.

La Crosse County Democratic Party
P. O. Box 1861
La Crosse, WI 54602 -1861

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Received _____
Renewal Month _____

Name(s) _____
Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone () _____
Email _____
*Occupation _____

*Contributions are not tax deductible for federal tax purposes. State law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

I'm interested in learning more about DPW caucuses:

- American Indian Caucus
Black Caucus
Environmental Caucus
Labor Caucus
Latinx Caucus
LGBT Caucus
Progressive Caucus
Rural Caucus
Veterans' Caucus
Women's Caucus