

# Candidate for Wisconsin governor promises permanent Republican power

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The Republican candidate for governor of Wisconsin, millionaire construction boss Tim Michels, told supporters at a rally Monday that if he won on November 8, the Republican Party would remain in power forever. “Republicans will never lose another election in Wisconsin after I’m elected governor,” he declared.

This starkly anti-democratic promise, effectively pledging the establishment of a one-party dictatorship in the Midwestern state, shows the real content to the claims by hundreds of Republican candidates that they have concerns about “election integrity,” or that the 2020 election in which Donald Trump was defeated was actually “rigged” by the Democrats.

In the case of Michels in Wisconsin, after his boast about achieving permanent power for the Republican Party was made public in media reports, his campaign tried to pretend he had not meant it that way. They were concerned that a backlash against this statement could affect the outcome of the election, currently seen as a toss-up between Michels and incumbent Democrat Tony Evers.

Michels would insure Republican candidates were successful because of the results he would supposedly achieve, his campaign said: “lower taxes, better schools, uniform election laws and safer communities.” How this miracle would be accomplished and how it would assure perpetual political power the campaign did not explain.

Given the record of the Republican Party in Wisconsin, however, the meaning of Michels’ words is not in doubt. The state has been a watchword for Republican gerrymandering to rig elections, with district boundaries so crafted that with 47 percent of the vote in 2020, Republicans hold 64 percent of the seats in the state legislature.

Republican candidates in virtually every closely contested state have made similar promises, although none so brutally direct as the statement by Michels.

Hundreds of Republican candidates for Congress and for top state government positions are election “denialists,” who reject the legitimacy of the 2020 election in which Joe Biden defeated Trump by 7 million votes, and by a wide margin in the Electoral College.

These include candidates for governor and secretary of state (usually the top election official) in nearly all the “battleground” states in the 2020 presidential elections, which are expected to be closely contested in the 2024 presidential election. In the event the Republican candidates win these contests—and most are considered toss-ups or within the margin of error in the latest polls—the Republican presidential candidate could have a decisive edge, regardless of actual popular sentiment.

Biden won six states in 2020 by narrow margins in the popular vote: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. All six have gubernatorial contests in 2022 and four of the six have elections for the top state official to oversee the voting (Pennsylvania’s secretary of state is appointed by the governor, and Wisconsin has no election official with statewide authority).

Eight of the ten Republican candidates in these races—all but the two in Georgia—are fervent supporters of Trump and his bogus claims that the 2020 election was stolen. These include Kari Lake and Mark Finchem in Arizona, Tudor Dixon and Kristina Karamo in Michigan, Joe Lombardi and Jim Marchant in Nevada, Doug Mastriano in Pennsylvania and Michels in Wisconsin. Finchem, Karamo and Marchant are running for secretary of state, and the other five for governor.

Mastriano, now the Republican candidate for governor of Pennsylvania, brought three busloads of Trump supporters to the January 6, 2021, rally in front of the White House which culminated in a march on Congress and then the fascist-led storming of Capitol Hill.

Finchem, running for secretary of state in Arizona, is a

self-admitted member of the Oath Keepers, one of the paramilitary groups that played a key role in attacking the Capitol on January 6. Finchem was in Washington for that event, and he attended a QAnon conference this year in Las Vegas, along with Marchant and Karamo.

Marchant, running for secretary of state in Nevada, played the leading role in organizing a network of “America First” candidates for secretary of state in at least eight states, all pledged to seek the overturn of the 2020 election result and to guarantee a Republican victory in 2024. Interviewed on the podcast of fascist Steve Bannon, he said the purpose of the group was to find “ways to influence the next election in 2022” and “export it all over the country.”

In Michigan, Republican secretary of state candidate Karamo has filed suit asking a judge to require residents of Detroit to vote in person or obtain their ballots in person at the clerk’s office. Karamo, who is African American, has embraced Trump’s claim that ballot-stuffing in Detroit was responsible for his election defeat in 2020.

The eight Republican candidates for secretary of state enlisted in Marchant’s “America First” coalition are all pledged to cut back on voter access to the polls through such methods as restricting mail-in ballots, curbing the hours and days during which polls are open and purging people from the list of registered voters for the most trivial of reasons. Marchant and several others also want to eliminate electronic voting entirely and conduct elections entirely through paper ballots that are hand-counted—an enormous source both of erroneous figures and long delays in obtaining results.

Such vote-rigging methods are not, by any means, the only threat to the democratic rights of working people. Far more ominous is the increasing resort to intimidation, threats and outright violence, which has culminated in the assault on Paul Pelosi, husband of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, which was described as “near-fatal” by the police.

Leading Democrats have belatedly raised the issue of the attack on democracy, with President Biden making a campaign speech on the subject Wednesday evening near the Capitol, and former President Barack Obama taking it up later that night at a rally in Arizona.

Both speeches revealed the enormous political crisis in the United States and the complete impotence of the Democratic Party. The WSWs analyzed Biden’s pathetic remarks here.

Obama’s were no better. He warned that if Republicans won the state’s top three offices—governor, attorney

general and secretary of state, “Democracy as we know it may not survive in Arizona.”

As with Biden, Obama sought to use the threat of Republican dictatorship to motivate voting for the Democrats, while at the same offering no action to oppose fascist violence.

Instead, he boasted of his own role in welcoming Trump to the White House.

“When Donald Trump won, I stayed up till 3 in the morning so I could offer a congratulatory call to somebody who opposed everything I stood for, but I believed in the peaceful transfer of power,” Obama said. “I sat at his inauguration. We welcomed him into the White House... Does that apply to only one side?”

Obama was diplomatically silent about the most revealing event of the transition to Trump, when he told the media that the 2016 election had been an “intramural scrimmage,” and that the Democrats and Republicans are “on the same team.” Indeed they are: the “team” of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus.

Such is the crisis of American capitalism, however, that one faction is seeking to eliminate the other, in order to establish an openly authoritarian regime to suppress the upsurge in the class struggle and assert the overseas interests of American imperialism through military aggression.

With the drastic shift to the right under Trump, the Republican Party is being transformed into an outright fascist political formation, with demands for lockstep loyalty to the party leader and an open resort to intimidation, threats of violence and outright physical assault.



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