***Republicans may get "civility" at tonight's forum -- but long-term damage has already been done.***

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MADISON - Republican Party-endorsed U.S. Senate candidate **Leah Vukmir** and her opponent **Kevin Nicholson** may put on a show of feigned "civility" at tonight's Republican Women of Dane County candidate forum -- after all, they nearly made it through last month's Americans for Prosperity debate without throwing punches. But make no mistake: Wisconsin's Republican U.S. Senate primary has been defined by Vukmir and Nicholson taking increasingly ultraconservative, extreme policy positions while they've lobbed escalating personal attacks at each other.

A veneer of civility at tonight's forum would surely be a cause for celebration among Wisconsin Republicans. For example: **Former Tommy Thompson aide Bill McCoshen** and **Sen. Ron**

**Johnson** h
ave respectively called for Nicholson
to “[E]ither step out of the race or at least not attack [Vukmir]” and “Please do nothing to harm the other candidate.” Vukmir herself
echoed that sentiment yesterday
, calling on Nicholson to drop out.

But it doesn’t matter if Vukmir and Nicholson somehow manage to have a “respectful” debate tonight. GOP infighting and Vukmir and Nicholson’s mutual animosity have for months been the status quo. Vukmir has made it more than clear that she believes that Wisconsinites can’t trust Nicholson. And ignoring Wisconsin Republicans’ pleas for post-convention unity, Nicholson has nevertheless continued to attack Vukmir as “a career politician.”

“Vukmir and Nicholson's brutal infighting has left the Republicans with a lagging party brand and a lack of enthusiasm in their base,” **said Brad Bainum, Democratic Party of Wisconsin spokesperson for the 2018 Senate race** . “No matter tonight's outcome, there’s no denying that Wisconsin Republicans’ 2018 primary has already surpassed the nastiness of 2012’s smackdown.