



***State Democrats move ahead of Republican counterparts with April election.***

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**MADISON, WI** -- The spring election that concluded on April 13th with Judge Jill Karofsky defeating Donald Trump's candidate Justice Dan Kelly by more than ten points proved the superior organizing and digital infrastructure of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin (DPW) over their Republican counterpart. Since the victory, the DPW has continued to build their field and digital infrastructure to support the Democrat's presumptive nominee Vice-President Joe Biden.

***See the story below to learn more about the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's organizing and digital infrastructure.***

[WI Examiner: Political organizers pivot to a digital campaign](#)

With COVID-19 shutdown, Democrats finds a virtue in necessity  
By Erik Gunn

## **KEY POINTS:**

- When Vice President Mike Pence visited Madison's GE Healthcare ventilator factory on April 21 to praise company workers and tout the Trump administration's response to COVID-19, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin offered a rebuttal a couple of days later.
- In a video on its Facebook page, Democratic Party spokesperson Philip Shulman looked at the camera and walked through a point-by-point takedown of President Donald Trump's claims on his nightly videos about the pandemic.
- Of course, that's part of Shulman's job as the voice of the Democratic Party's Trump rapid response operation in Wisconsin. But a few things stood out. The video wasn't presented

Written by WisDems Press, Philip Shulman

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as a 30- or 60-second TV spot. It wasn't even on TV, just on social media.

- The format is professional yet informal, and the temperature is relatively cool. The format "really allows us to communicate what the facts are and tie it into how it affects people in Wisconsin," Shulman says. By "connecting all these dots for people," he hopes to be able to get across the message of "Trump's failure to Wisconsinites."

- Shulman says more videos will be rolling out over the 2020 presidential campaign — "sometimes longer videos, sometimes shorter snippets" — and what sets them apart from past efforts is a greater emphasis on hard information and explanation.

- And another thing: For the foreseeable future, with perhaps the exception of direct mail,

- With many people required to stay home, and also intensely concerned about how the disease could affect not just their health and life but their livelihood, "they're spending a lot more time on the internet and a lot more time on social media platforms," Shulman says. "It gives us a bigger window to tell a bigger story."

- That window includes the primary social media platforms — Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, along with Google advertising.

- "There's a bigger hunger for this information because people have the time," Shulman says. "This is touching everybody's lives. There's no one who's immune to this."

- Training — "three years building an armada of people knocking on doors" — switched to how to use Zoom calls to reach out to organize voters and supporters. Volunteers learned how to effectively use text messaging in the place of placards left at people's screen doors.

- One tactical change was to organize phone banks so that the volunteers calling would be connecting with people in their own community instead of just anyone, he says. "We're having a higher connection rate and warmer conversations than conventional statewide [campaign] phone conversations."

- Voting by mail is a particularly resonant issue with voters, organizers have found, and so information about how to do that is welcomed by many who are at the other end of the campaign volunteers' lines. "People are deeply motivated to vote right now, and they're trying to balance the urgency of voting with their fear of the pandemic," says Wikler. "Campaigning about voting from home is a useful service."

- Shulman says the party's shift to an all-digital strategy was made easier because it had already built a strong organizing structure that made use of digital tools, and forging "long-standing relationships" dating back to a year before the 2018 "blue wave" election in which Democrats swept the state's top offices.

- The Supreme Court race was the test that proved the party had made a successful transition, Shulman says.