

What Happened,  
What We Learned,  
What's Next

# 2024 Election Recap



What Happened?

# Federal Results



## **Trump Wins**

Becomes only second  
U.S. President to serve  
non-consecutive terms



## **GOP Take Control of U.S. Senate**

Baldwin reelected to U.S.  
Senate by approx. 20k  
votes



## **GOP Retains Control of U.S. House**

# State Results

## Democrats Sweep Competitive Senate Seats

- Two incumbents defeated (Stroebe and Ballweg)
- GOP majority down from 22 to 18

## Democrats Gain 10 Seats in State Assembly

- GOP majority down from 64 to 54



# Legislative Leadership

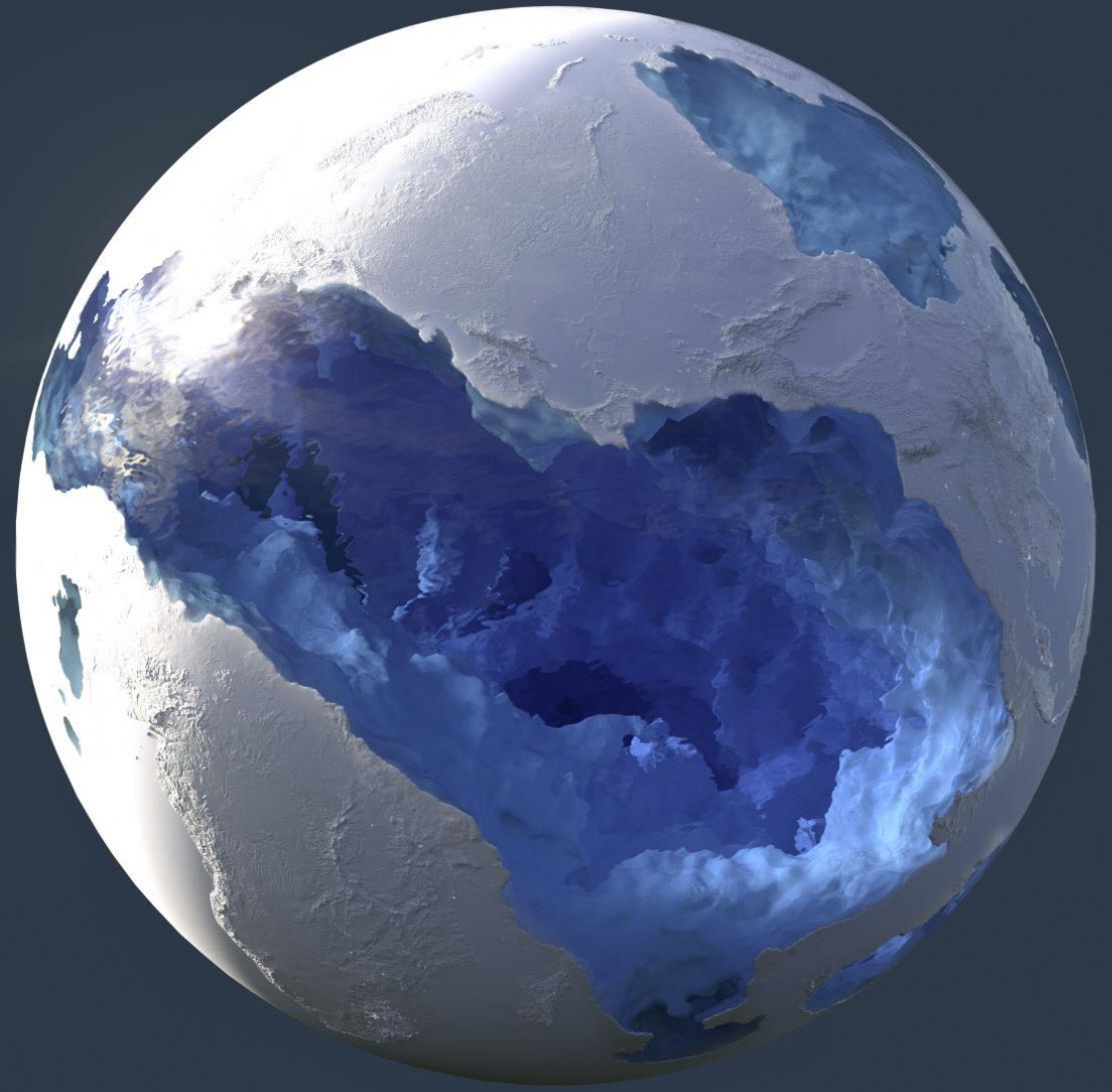
## State Senate

- LeMahieu reelected majority leader
- Felzkowski replaces Kapenga as senate president
- Hesselbein reelected minority leader
- Three (3) open GOP seats on joint finance (Felzkowski, Ballweg, Stroebel)

## State Assembly

- Vos reelected speaker
- August reelected majority leader
- Neubauer reelected minority leader

What Did We  
Learn?



# We Are Experiencing a Political Realignment

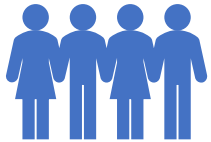
- Traditional Political Coalitions
  - **GOP**
    - Upper and upper middle socioeconomic status
    - Country club'ers
    - "C" suite
    - White
    - Suburban
    - Older voters
  - **Dems**
    - Union
    - Blue collar
    - Lower socioeconomic status
    - Diversity
    - Urban
    - Younger voters

# We Are Experiencing a Political Realignment

- New Political Coalitions
  - **GOP**
    - Union
    - Blue collar
    - Younger voters
    - Lower socioeconomic status
    - Men (white, brown, black)
    - Rural
    - Non-college educated
  - **Dems**
    - “C” Suite
    - College educated
    - Women
    - Urban and Suburban
    - Diversity



# It's the Economy, Stupid.



Once again, social issues take a backseat to economic hardship



60% of Wisconsin voters feel the economy is headed in the wrong direction





# Wisconsin is Purple... Like, Really Really Purple

- Trump 2016, Biden 2020, Trump 2024
  - All decided by 40k votes or less
- Trump/Baldwin – Evers/Johnson
- More than a dozen state legislative races decided by less than 3 points





# Redistricting (and campaigns) Matter



Under “old” GOP maps, Republicans held veto-proof majority in state senate and near veto-proof majority in assembly



Under “new” Evers maps, margins are much closer

Most competitive state legislative districts in a generation

Trump wins state, but GOP loses 14 legislative seats



In the 10 most contested Assembly races, GOP candidates outperformed their districts



In the 4 most contested Senate races, GOP candidates underperformed their districts

# Money Makes the Political World Go Round

- Campaigns are increasingly more sophisticated, necessitating more resources (money)
- Competitive state assembly races cost upwards of \$2 million
- Competitive state senate races cost upwards of \$5 million
- Campaign cash knows no borders
  - Democrats far outperform Republicans in raising campaign funds from outside Wisconsin
  - Republicans were outspent 4-1



# 2026: Advantage Legislative Democrats

Democrats made substantial gains in both houses of the legislature

Democrats needed to pick up 2 seats in the state senate for it to be “in play” in 2026; they picked up 4

Democrats cut assembly margin; yet failed to win a few “Dem” seats. More room for growth

Trump midterm (again) . . .



What's  
Next?



# Governing

How will GOP govern with narrow majorities?



State Senate

Rule of 17?

Nass, Kapenga, others?

LeMahieu/Felzkowski dynamic

Bipartisanship? Do Dems want to help? Is it in their interest? What will they demand?



State Assembly

Vos approach?

Decentralized power structure? Everyone's a kingmaker?

Working relationship with Evers?

# Policy

What are the majority party's priorities?

Tax cuts, tax cuts, tax cuts, and . . . ?



Have they learned anything from the election? Will their policy goals change or adjust?



More partisan or less partisan?



Major Policy to be Debated

Tax Cuts

K12 Education

Higher  
Education

Transportation  
Funding

Child Care

# Transportation

## Will 2025 Be “The Year?”

- Narrow majorities lead to grand bargain?
- Gov continues to lead...
  - with GPR caveat




## Will 2025 Be “More of the Same”

- \$4B general fund surplus
  - more likely leads to band-aid approach?
- Too much uncertainty?
  - Feds, EV, etc.



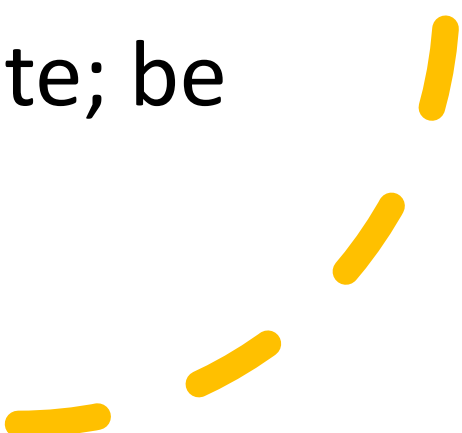
## Lobbying/Advocacy

- To succeed, groups must adapt and evolve
    - Prepare for what's coming before others do and before it happens
      - If it doesn't materialize, you are out nothing
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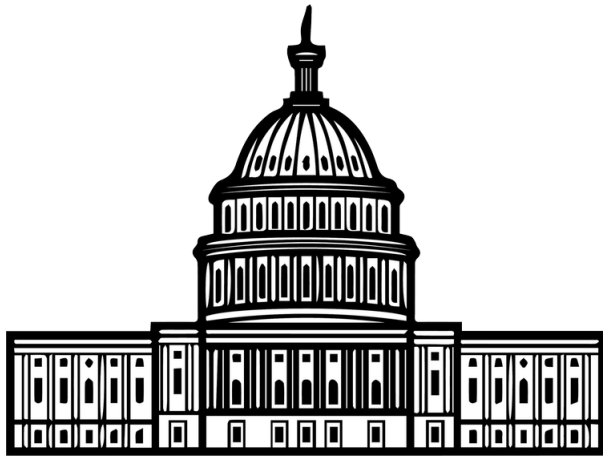




## Lobbying/Advocacy

- Build new relationships (3 dozen new members)
  - Build new coalitions with new partners that can help you
  - Begin planning for 2026; must engage in the political process (campaigns)
  - Educate, educate, educate; be present
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# Questions?



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