

# How do county's election results compare to 2018?

## Republican margin of victory in governor's race decreased in 35 of 38 municipalities

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WAUKESHA COUNTY — Republican candidates won a majority of Waukesha County's votes in every race in the 2022 midterm election, even flipping

Assembly District 13, the county's only state assembly seat held by a Democrat, to a Republican.

But in statewide races, Republicans won by a smaller margin in nearly all municipalities compared to 2018, something that local party leaders attribute to shifting demographics and key

issues like abortion.

In 2018, Republican candidate for governor Scott Walker won the county by a 34.08% margin over Democrat Tony Evers (ignoring third party and write-in

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results). In 2022, Republican candidate Tim Michels only won by 20.49%, according to election data on the Waukesha County website.

"We'll continue to work hard," said Paul Farrow, chairman of the Wisconsin GOP and Waukesha county executive. "We still have a good majority lean for the Republican vote, but it's one where I think we need to work harder on different populations and encourage people to look at the principles of the party and smaller government and less restrictions to ensure that's the way we want to go."

Results in the U.S. Senate and attorney general races had similar results: Republican Ron Johnson won against former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes with a 25% margin in the county this year, compared to a 38% margin in 2016 when Johnson ran against Russ Feingold. Likewise, for attorney general, Republicans' margin of victory in Waukesha County decreased from nearly 35% in 2018 to 23.5% in 2022, county election data shows.

"Over the last six years that Donald Trump became the face of the Republican Party, it has become more and more extreme, giving (Democrats) that in to talk to voters and to talk to former Republicans that we are a reasonable, moderate alternative that wants to focus on governing, and that strategy has paid off in huge ways," said Matt Mareno, chair of the Waukesha County Democratic Party.

Of the 38 voting municipalities in the county, Republicans' margin of victory in the governor's race was smaller in 35 of them, results from the county clerk's office show.

The village of Butler saw Republicans' margin of victory decrease the most, 28%, along with places like Brookfield, Menomonee Falls and Delafield seeing decreases in the mid to upper teens.

In Waukesha, Michels won by a 3.8% margin, compared to Walker's 15% in 2018.

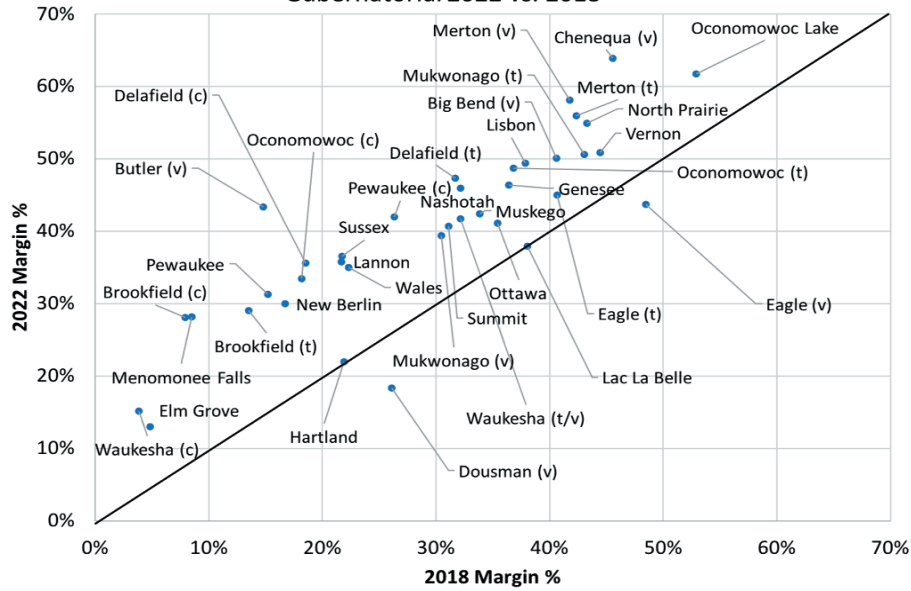
"You never really know until the results start rolling in, so once we started seeing results coming in from Brookfield and the city of Waukesha, we knew we were in a really good place and what we've been laying the groundwork for years was paying off," Mareno said.

The Republican margin of victory increased in Dousman, Eagle and Lac La Belle, election results show.

## Issues & demographics

Farrow and Mareno agree that as Waukesha County grows and its demographics change, election results will continue to shift.

## Waukesha County Republican margin of victory by municipality Gubernatorial 2022 vs. 2018



Republicans' margin of victory in the governor's race in Waukesha County, 2018 compared to 2022. Municipalities above the black line saw Republicans' margin of victory decrease between the elections, municipalities below the black line saw the margin increase. The farther from the line, the larger the change between 2018 and 2022.

Graphic by Cole Vandermause/Freeman Staff

"We're seeing kind of the younger professional moving in from the Milwaukee area, especially to the east side of the county and that is having a major impact on the other side," Farrow said.

"We know that Waukesha County itself is one of the older counties agewise and we know that a number of our citizens who are retiring are taking up residency in other states, and I think that's going to have an impact on us as well."

According to Mareno, he heard from poll workers that same-day voter registration in the city of Waukesha was high and that more young people and Hispanic people were voting, which Mareno attributes partially to the shift since 2018.

Farrow and Mareno also agree that issues like abortion and the economy impacted how people in Waukesha voted.

"We know that public safety is a concern for the constituents here in the county," Farrow said. "I don't think the economy was as much of a concern when you look at some of the numbers that came out of it. Some social issues, with abortion, were ones that I think were more of a concern than we anticipated from the Republican side, and we'll have to work through."

"We're all struggling with inflation, but I think a lot of voters were able to see through Ron Johnson and Tim Michels just talking about it without offering

solutions," Mareno said.

## Assembly District 13

In the 2020 election, Democrat Sara Rodriguez flipped Wisconsin's 13th Assembly District and was the only Democrat representing Waukesha County in Madison. On Tuesday, the seat flipped back to Republican control with Tom Michalski's victory over Democrat Sarah Harrison, making all assembly members and senators from Waukesha County Republican.

Rodriguez did not run for re-election, rather running for lieutenant governor and winning with Evers on Tuesday.

"Tom (Michalski) is one that has worked diligently within the communities to

ensure that he helps out where he can and represents the people of the districts he's been in," Farrow said. "I think that showed again on Tuesday."

Between 2020 and 2022, District 13's boundaries changed to include less of Milwaukee County and more of Waukesha County.

"I think one of the biggest things I'm disappointed about is just how badly gerrymandering has affected our state," Mareno said.

"The state is still a mixed state, very purple," Farrow said. "But we'll keep watching and working with the demographics that we have."

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