

# Wisconsin Supreme Court

VOTE APRIL 4 FOR WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT

CANDIDATES

DANIEL  
KELLY



JANET  
PROTASIEWICZ



## Why your April 4 vote matters

April 4 will decide control of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Daniel Kelly, a conservative supported by Republicans, and Janet Protasiewicz, a liberal supported by Democrats, are vying to win a 10-year term in the general election.

This election will either keep the Court's 4-3 conservative majority or switch it to the liberals. Four years ago, 6,000 votes decided a Wisconsin Supreme Court seat, while three in four eligible voters stayed home. This election could be just as close.

The winner will rule on on [a challenge by Wisconsin's Attorney General to the state's 1849 abortion ban](#), which [took effect](#) after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and makes no exceptions for cases of rape or incest. They'll likely rule on [labor issues](#) and [voting rules cases](#) like a 2022 decision [banning ballot drop boxes](#) or the 2020 [Trump attempt to overturn his election loss](#). And they'll be on the court for the [next round of redistricting](#) and would rule on [any](#) challenges to [current Republican-drawn legislative maps](#).

Here's background on the candidates' experience, positions, publicized endorsements, and relevant rulings. **For how and when to vote, see below.**

The candidates and outside groups are spending [huge sums](#), mostly on ads. Political ads can be misleading. Use our [Detecting Disinformation](#) guide to help assess them—and follow our links to the candidates' actual positions.

### DANIEL KELLY

[justicedanielkelly.com](http://justicedanielkelly.com)

Kelly [graduated from Carroll University and earned a J.D. from Regent University School of Law](#). He clerked [on the Wisconsin Court of Appeals and the U.S. Court of Federal Claims](#), where he then [served as staff attorney](#). He spent more than two decades in private practice. In 2016 Republican Governor [Scott Walker appointed Kelly](#) to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, where he served until 2020, when his term ended. Defeated for re-election, he [joined the Institute for Reforming Government as a Senior Fellow](#). He also worked as [special counsel to the Wisconsin Republican Party](#) on contesting Donald Trump's 2020 election loss and the Trump alternative slate of electors.

- **On abortion**, Kelly [opposes it](#). He has called it "[a policy deadly to children](#)," with "[its primary purpose harming children](#)." He wrote that [Democrats favor abortion "to preserve sexual libertinism."](#)

### JANET PROTASIEWICZ

[janetforjustice.com](http://janetforjustice.com)

Protasiewicz graduated from [University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and earned a J.D. from Marquette University Law School](#), where she was later an adjunct Professor of Law. She was a [Milwaukee County assistant district attorney](#) for more than 25 years. In 2014 Protasiewicz was elected to the Milwaukee County Circuit Court, [where she now works in Family Court](#) and has [presided over homicide, sexual assault, misdemeanor, domestic violence, and drug courts](#).

- **On abortion**, Protasiewicz said, "[a woman's right to make decisions over her own body should be... not made by the government but made by the person who's ultimately being affected by them.](#)"

### KELLY (cont.)

- **On affirmative action**, he opposes it, saying that while [“affirmative action and slavery differ,... both spring from the same taproot.... Morally, and as a matter of law, they are the same.”](#)
- **On COVID restrictions**, he joined a 2020 Wisconsin Supreme Court majority to [strike down a Wisconsin Department of Health Services “Safer at Home” emergency order](#) that limited public activities as an initial response to COVID. His ruling, he said, resulted in [“the restoration of our individual liberties and the end of the forced government shutdown.”](#)
- **On gun rules**, he wrote the 2017 Wisconsin Supreme Court decision [striking down a gun ban on Madison’s buses](#), based on a state law prohibiting municipal gun regulations stronger than state laws. The result, he says, protected [“our Second Amendment Rights.”](#)
- **On LGBTQ rights**, he wrote that legalizing same-sex marriage is an [“illegitimate exercise of state power.”](#)
- **On redistricting and gerrymandering**, he supported the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s approval of [Republican-drawn legislative maps strongly favoring that party’s candidates](#): “you have to... take the standards that are provided by the Wisconsin Constitution, and the one vote, one person [and you adjust the map based on those principles.... And then allow the Legislature to address the political aspects of a redistricting map.](#)”
- **On unions**, he [supported Act 10](#), which ended almost all collective bargaining for public employees. He criticized a decision by a Dane County judge that allowed [public-employee collective bargaining as inappropriate judicial activism](#).
- **On his priorities**, [“It is imperative that we elect a judicial conservative who will uphold the rule of law.”](#)

Kelly’s [endorsements](#) include Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Rebecca Bradley—part of the Court’s conservative bloc—conservative primary candidate [Judge Jennifer Dorow](#), Appeals Court judge Shelley Grogan, and 19 Wisconsin county sheriffs, [Americans for Prosperity-Wisconsin](#), Pro-Life Wisconsin Victory Fund PAC, Wisconsin Family Action, and Wisconsin Right to Life.

### PROTASIEWICZ (cont.)

- **On judicial process**, she said, [“I see our criminal and civil justice system—and our democracy—under attack by radical partisanship.... On an almost-daily basis, our most closely-held constitutional rights are under attack by radical right-wing extremists....](#) We must restore confidence that judges aren’t just trying to reach their favored outcomes, but actually applying the law and the constitution.”
- **On redistricting and gerrymandering**, she said the Wisconsin Supreme Court-approved, [Republican-drawn maps strongly favoring that party’s candidates “are rigged. I don’t think you could sell to any reasonable person that the maps are fair.”](#) On the current Legislature, she said, [“rather than being representative of a purple state, you see it is heavily skewed red.”](#)
- **On unions**, she said that [Governor Scott Walker’s 2011 law effectively ending collective bargaining rights for most public employees was unconstitutional](#).
- **On voting rules**, she said, “when you have values of fairness,...that everybody’s vote should count, that in a democracy, everybody should be heard.... while [I can’t say how I would particularly vote on an issue,...those values would be brought into the Supreme Court chamber with me.](#)”
- **On her priorities**, she said, [“I have a commonsense approach... I don’t consider myself a real partisan. I’m somebody who’s going to uphold the Constitution... do my best to get to the right decision by following the rule of law... nothing predetermined.”](#)

Protasiewicz’s [endorsements](#) include current Wisconsin Supreme Court Justices Rebecca Dallet, Jill Karovsky, and Ann Walsh Bradley—the Court’s liberal bloc—Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin, Planned Parenthood, American Federation of Teachers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, United Auto Workers, and other unions, elected officials, and 114 current or former judges.

# How to Register and Vote in the April 4 Wisconsin Supreme Court Election

Here's how to register and vote in the April 4 general election that will decide control of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Daniel Kelly, a Republican-supported conservative, and Janet Protasiewicz, a Democratic-supported liberal, won the February primary. On April 4 voters will choose between the two. Here's how to vote.

## Dates and Deadlines

### Registration

**Wednesday, March 15**

Deadline to [register to vote online](#) or [by mail](#) (postmark date)

**Friday, March 31 at 5:00 p.m.**

Deadline to register in your [municipal clerk's office](#).

**Election Day Registration:  
Tuesday, April 4, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

Wisconsin has election-day registration. If you have [valid photo ID](#) and [proof of residence](#), you can register and vote at your [primary election polling place](#).

### Absentee Voting

**Thursday, March 30 by 5:00 p.m.**

Last day for an absentee ballot request to be received by your municipal clerk (regular voters).

(See this [deadline page](#) for indefinitely confined, hospitalized, and military voters.)

### Early Voting

**Tuesday, March 21 to Sunday, April 2**

You can request and vote an absentee ballot in-person in your [municipal clerk's office](#) (dates may vary depending on your municipality; check their office before you go)

**Tuesday, April 4 at 8:00 p.m.**

Deadline for an absentee ballot to be received by your municipal clerk (by mail or delivery).

### Election Day

**Tuesday, April 4  
7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

Primary Election day at your [polling place](#).

## Voting Tools and Information

To vote in Wisconsin, you'll need to register, discover your voting options, and find your polling place for in-person voting. Here's where to go to make all that happen.

- Wisconsin's **official MyVote site** gives you tools and requirements for registering to vote, voting early, voting absentee, finding your polling place, and more.
- When you register, whether by mail, online, or in person, you'll need [proof of residence](#). This page [lists acceptable forms of proof](#) and describes how you'll need to present that proof.
- You'll need to present [a valid photo ID](#) when you vote. This page [lists acceptable forms of ID](#), including a valid Wisconsin driver license or a free [Wisconsin state ID card](#).
- **If you're a student**, your student photo ID card may work as voter ID, but only if it's issued by a Wisconsin university or college, or technical college, and only if it contains **the date the card was issued** and **your signature**, with an expiration date no later than two years after date of issuance. (Valid student IDs can still be used if expired, but then must be accompanied by a separate document that proves current enrollment, such as a tuition fee receipt, enrollment verification letter, or class schedule.)
- **When a school's ID card isn't sufficient as voter ID**, some schools will issue a separate photo ID card for voting on request. [Links on this page](#) show which schools' IDs are acceptable for voting and which schools provide voting-compliant ID.
- **If you're a convicted felon you need to complete probation, parole, and supervision**, then reregister. If you're in jail for a misdemeanor you can still vote.

## Absentee Voting

All voters in Wisconsin can request an **absentee ballot** be mailed to them for any reason, so long as they've already registered. You can request an absentee ballot on the [MyVote site](#) and must provide [a copy of a valid photo ID](#) with your first absentee ballot request.

