

WPR NEWS ELECTION COVERAGE POLICY:

GENERAL PHILOSOPHY:

The Wisconsin Public Radio news department will provide fair and balanced coverage of all statewide races. Some state legislative races may be singled out for coverage based on their significance to legislative control, at the discretion of WPR upper news management. To a lesser degree, interesting races of significant regional or local importance may be covered as issues warrant. WPR News has traditionally specialized in election coverage, both in reporting in advance of elections and in reporting results on election night, and maintains a commitment to providing in-depth information on candidates and campaign issues.

*****SPECIFICS:

CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. The initial campaign announcements of all candidates in races for governor, Lt. governor, attorney general, state supreme court and state superintendent of public instruction will be covered in news reports. If WPR is unaware of the initial event, the news staff will endeavor to produce the report as soon as possible.
2. WPR will select key congressional races and cover the announcements of all candidates in races of key importance. Key is generally defined as an incumbent is leaving, has run into significant trouble or faces a serious challenge by at least one opponent.
3. Coverage of announcements in other all races is limited to the discretion of WPR news management, based on their news value to a statewide audience.

GENERAL COVERAGE

Throughout the course of a campaign season, once the elections board has issued its final list of certified candidates, WPR news will provide reports on all races for statewide office. News management may choose to assign coverage of other non-statewide races based on their significance. Most congressional races are also covered. In all cases, the number and length of these reports will vary, based on news management's determination of statewide interest in the race.

Overall coverage will provide equal opportunities to all candidates in races that are selected, although individual news reports may focus on a particular candidate as events warrant. Reports will vary, but will often focus on profiles, issues, or advertising analysis, at the discretion of the WPR news management. If one candidate attacks another, an effort will be made to allow the candidate under attack to respond.

EQUAL TIME POLICY

Following FCC guidelines, bona fide news coverage that might include a candidate for public office, but is not a story about the campaign, is exempt from equal time requirements.

In addition, during the course of campaign coverage, if a candidate refuses to grant an interview or is unavailable over a reasonable length of time, the candidate will relinquish the right for equal time.

BUREAU COVERAGE AND FORUMS

Wisconsin Public Radio bureaus may at times choose to hold on-air forums on races of significant regional importance. This coverage may vary from one region to the next.

REPORTER OBJECTIVITY

Wisconsin Public Radio news staff reporters will avoid activities that could be perceived as a conflict of interest in covering political campaigns. For example, reporters will not run for public office, will not participate or work in electoral campaigns, nor will they publicly endorse candidates.

ELECTION NIGHT SPECIALS

Election night broadcasts will focus on statewide races for office. In races that merit coverage, air time will be offered to all candidates, but this is dependent on candidate availability.

PRIMARIES VS. GENERAL ELECTION COVERAGE

The potential multitude of candidates in primary elections may mean that individuals receive less air time in reporting before the primary than finalists during the general election. However, whatever time is allowed to each race, equal time will be offered to all candidates.

EDITORIALS

The Wisconsin Public Radio news staff does not editorialize on behalf of any candidates. All news reporting will strictly avoid any implications of favoring a particular candidate.