

The Organizations

The Institute for Political Innovation

A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that advocates for “final five”-style voting, as well as zero-based rulemaking. Founded by Katherine Gehl 2020. Senior Advisor is Sara Eskrich, who also serves as the Executive Director of Democracy Found. [Latest 990 available here](#). Donors are anonymous due to non-profit status.

Staff: <https://political-innovation.org/our-staff>

Advisory Council: <https://political-innovation.org/advisory-council/>

Democracy Found

Run by Sara Eskrich (and co-founded and co-chaired by Katherine Gehl and Austin Ramirez), Democracy Found pushes for final five voting. It has a [501\(c\)3](#) and [501\(c\)4](#) branch, and lists 22 “legislative champions” on its website (seven Republicans and 15 Democrats). From 2020 to the present, Democracy Found has served as a “conduit” for political contributions to certain candidates in Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, a conduit is an entity that collects and distributes financial contributions from donors to earmarked candidates and PACs.

Over the last three years, it has collected and disseminated roughly \$370,000 to 55 candidates and committees for office in Wisconsin (38 Republican-affiliated and 17 Democrat-affiliated). The three largest recipients are Republican Dale Kooynga (\$25,130), Democrat Jeff Smith (\$24,700), and Republican Joel Kitchens (\$22,820). The full breakdown of donors and recipients is included in a separate file. Critically, Wisconsin and national Republican PACs have received significant contributions through the Democracy Found conduit. These PACs include the Republican Assembly Campaign Committee RACC (\$20,250), the Republican State Leadership Committee (\$10,000), and the Committee to Elect a Republican Senate (\$2,250).

About: <https://democracyfound.org/about-us>

Board, Advisory Council, and Leadership Circle: <https://democracyfound.org/about-us>

Veterans for All Voters

This California-based 501(c)3 organization (previously named Veterans for Political Innovation) also pushes for final five voting. The above-mentioned group Democracy Found serves as the group’s in-state coalition partner in Wisconsin. Donors are anonymous due to non-profit status.

Wisconsin leadership page: <https://www.veteransforallvoters.org/wisconsin>

The People

Katherine Gehl

Serves as the Founder of Democracy Found and Co-Founder and Co-Chair of Democracy Found. She was a past Obama-appointee to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and was instrumental in Alaska's adoption of final four voting. Gehl is the daughter of former Gehl Foods CEO John P. Gehl—she previously served as president and CEO of her father's company as well. Her and her siblings Jo Jo and Michael have donated a combined \$70,700 to Democracy Found to be disseminated to various Wisconsin candidates, with contributions earmarked to both Republican and Democrat candidates. Importantly, this includes funds dedicated to Republican PACs such as: \$5,000 to the Republican State Leadership Committee by Katherine Gehl and \$2,250 to the Republican Assembly Campaign Committee RACC by Michael Gehl. Separate from Democracy Found.

Sara Eskrich

Serves as the Executive Director of Democracy Found and a Senior Advisor to The Institute for Political Innovation. She was previously the Democrat-endorsed representative on the Madison Common Council (elections are officially nonpartisan). She also donated a total of \$400 through Democracy Found, earmarked to both Democrat and Republican candidates for state assembly and state senate (Riemer, Kurtz, Kitchens, Novak, Subeck, and Kooyenga).

Austin Ramirez

Serves as the Co-Founder and Co-Chair of Democracy Found, as well as a Co-Chair of the Institute for Political Innovation. He previously served as a White House Fellow in the National Economic Council during both the Obama and Trump administrations (although he was appointed during the last year of the Obama presidency and departed in the first year of the Trump presidency). He is the President and CEO of HUSCO International, a privately-owned mechanical control systems company. Together, him and his father Gus Ramirez have donated a combined \$76,850 to various political candidates in Wisconsin through Democracy Found.

Lynde Uihlein

Serves as a member of the advisory council for Democracy Found, through which she has donated \$32,130 to various Wisconsin candidates. Her maternal family is connected to the Bradley fortune (including the conservative Bradley Foundation), and her paternal family is connected to the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company. She is a prominent supporter of liberal causes and candidates, including EMILY's list, the League of Conservation Voters, Al Gore, John Kerry, Barack Obama, and more. In addition to her own contributions through Democracy Found, her daughter and son-in-law, Sarah Zimmerman and Steve Zimmerman, have also donated \$27,200 through the Democracy Found conduit as well. Sarah serves on the Democracy Found board, while Steve serves on the Democracy Found advisory council.