

## Wisconsin Primary Election Yields Few Surprises

By Misha Lee, MHA Wisconsin Lobbyist

The August primary election results yielded few surprises as we now head into what is expected to be a hotly contested November general election from the top of the ticket all the way on down. The recent election also proved to be a good night for incumbents with only one losing to a challenger candidate.

Looking at Congressional races, all eight of Wisconsin's seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are up for election this fall. Conversely, neither of Wisconsin's two U.S. Senate seats are up for election in this cycle.

### U.S. House of Representatives primaries of interest were:

- Longtime Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Beaver Dam) won the Republican primary with nearly 80 percent of the vote in the 5th Congressional District primary. Fitzgerald will face Democratic opponent Tom Palzewicz. Palzewicz was defeated by retiring Congressman James Sensenbrenner in 2018. Fitzgerald should easily win this election.
- In the 3rd Congressional District, Republican Derrick Van Orden (R-Hager City) won a two-way primary and will now face 12-term Democratic Congressman Ron Kind. Van Orden is a retired former Navy Seal, actor and business consultant. Kind won re-election in 2018 with 60 percent of the vote. This race will be one to watch on election night.
- Democrat Jessica King (D-Oshkosh), an attorney and former State Senator and Oshkosh City Council member, easily won a 3-way Democratic primary with 75 percent of the vote to challenge three-term Republican Congressman Glenn Grothman of Campbellsport in the 6th Congressional District. Grothman was re-elected in 2018 with 56 percent of the vote and is favored to win re-election.

In state legislative races, 16 of Wisconsin's 33 State Senate seats (even-numbered districts) and all 99 State Assembly seats are up for re-election this year. There were 9 legislative incumbents who faced primary challenges and 8 of them easily won their races, with all surpassing 60 percent of the vote.

### Wisconsin Senate primary races of interest were:

#### 6th Senate District (Sen. LaTonya Johnson, D-Milwaukee, incumbent)

- State Senator LaTonya Johnson easily held off a challenge in the Democratic primary by Michelle Bryant (D-Milwaukee), who is Chief of Staff to State Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee). Johnson captured 77 percent of the vote.

#### 10th Senate District (Sen. Patty Schachtner, D-Somerset, incumbent)

- Representative Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond) captured 66 percent of the vote in the Republican primary versus Cherie Link (R-Somerset). Stafsholt was first elected to the Assembly in 2016 and re-elected since. He is a farmer and owner of multiple small

businesses. Stafsholt will now face incumbent State Senator Patty Schachtner (D-Somerset) in the general election.

14th Senate District (Sen. Luther Olsen, R-Ripon, not seeking re-election)

- Representative Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) won her Republican primary with 69 percent of the vote for the opportunity to succeed retiring Senator Luther Olsen (R-Ripon). Ballweg was first elected to the State Assembly in 2010. Ballweg and her husband own a John Deere farming implement dealership. Ballweg will face Democrat Joni Anderson on the November ballot.

16th Senate District (Sen. Mark Miller, D-Monona, not seeking re-election)

- Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) won the 2-way Democratic primary to succeed retiring Senator Mark Miller (D-Monona). Sargent is a former member of the Dane County Board and has served in the Assembly since her first election in 2012. Sargent captured 77 percent of the vote.

26th Senate District (Sen. Fred Risser, D-Madison, not seeking re-election)

- Kelda Helen Roys won the 8-way Democratic primary to be the first person to represent what is now the 26th Senate District other than Senator Fred Risser since 1962. Roys is a former member of the Assembly and unsuccessful 2018 gubernatorial candidate. She captured 40 percent of the vote and does not have a general election opponent.

28th Senate District (Sen. David Craig, R-Big Bend, not seeking re-election)

- Republican Julian Bradley captured 43 percent of the vote in a 5-way Republican primary to succeed Sen. David Craig (R-Big Bend) in the 26th Senate District. Bradley will face Franklin entrepreneur and business owner Adam Murphy in this heavily Republican seat.

30th Senate District (Sen. Dave Hansen, D-Green Bay, not seeking re-election)

- Democrat Jonathon Hansen, the nephew of Senator Dave Hansen, a member of the De Pere City Council and a mortgage lender for a community bank, won the Democratic primary in the 30th Senate District with 62 percent of the vote. Hansen will face Republican Eric Wimberger, an attorney and unsuccessful candidate for the 30th Senate District.

32nd Senate District (Open Seat, Sen. Jennifer Shilling, D-La Crosse, resigned her seat)

- Democrat Brad Pfaff won the Democratic primary to succeed former Minority Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse) with 63 percent of the vote. Pfaff previously ran unsuccessfully for the State Senate in 2004. He has served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Congressman Ron Kind, Executive Director of US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency and as Secretary-Designee for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection until his confirmation was voted down by the State Senate. Pfaff will face Republican Dan Kapanke, a former state senator and baseball team owner in La Crosse. Kapanke previously represented the 32nd Senate District from 2004 to 2011 when he lost a recall election during the height of the Act 10 recall races. This race is a rematch of the 2004 Senate race where Kapanke defeated Pfaff by five points.

## **Wisconsin Assembly primary races of interest were:**

### 8th Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa, D-Milwaukee, was elected to the Milwaukee Common Council)

- Democrat JoAnna Bautch narrowly won her Democratic primary to succeed her sister Representative Zamarripa in representing the 8th Assembly District. Bautch is a director with Citizen Action Wisconsin and a community organizer with the Reproductive Justice Collective. The current margin is 18 votes.

### 9th Assembly District (Rep. Marisabel Cabrera, D-Milwaukee, incumbent)

- Representative Cabrera was successful in fighting off a Democratic primary challenge, capturing 58 percent of the vote. Cabrera is an immigration rights attorney and former chair of the Milwaukee Police and Fire Commission.

### 11th Assembly District (Rep. Jason Fields, D-Milwaukee, not seeking re-election)

- Dora Drake won a 4-way Democrat primary to succeed retiring Representative Jason Fields (D-Milwaukee). Drake is a member service coordinator at the Center for Self Sufficiency where she provides re-entry services to support persons re-entering society. Drake captured 47 percent of the vote.

### 14th Assembly District (Rep. Robyn Vining, D-Wauwatosa, incumbent)

- Republican Bonnie Lee will be the candidate to challenge freshman Democrat Representative Robyn Vining. Vining was the only Democrat to win a previously held Republican seat two years ago. Lee is the Director of Outreach Ministry at Northwest Baptist church and was endorsed by Senator Dale Kooyenga (R-Brookfield) who formerly represented the 14th District. Lee captured 80 percent of the vote.

### 17th Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. David Crowley, D-Milwaukee, was elected Milwaukee County Executive)

- Supreme Moore Omokunde captured 56 percent of the vote in the Democratic primary to succeed County Executive David Crowley. Omokunde is a Milwaukee County Board Supervisor and son of Milwaukee Congresswoman Gwen Moore.

### 29th Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. Rob Stafsholt, R-New Richmond, is running for the State Senate)

- Clint Moses won the Republican primary to succeed Representative Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond). Moses is a chiropractor and school board member. Moses will face Democrat John Calabrese. Calabrese previously ran for the State Senate and State Assembly losing to Stafsholt in 2018.

### 35th Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. Mary Felzkowski, R-Irma, is running for the State Senate)

- Calvin Callahan won the 2-way Republican primary to succeed Representative Mary Felzkowski who is running for the State Senate. Callahan is a Lincoln County Board Supervisor and the owner of Callahan Wholesale. Callahan will face Democrat Tyler Ruprecht on the November ballot.

### 41st Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. Joan Ballweg, R-Markesan, is running for the State Senate)

- Republican Alex Dallman captured nearly 50 percent of the vote in a 4-way Republican primary to succeed Representative Ballweg as the Republican nominee for the 41st

District. Dallman is a long-time staffer to Congressman Glenn Grothman. Dallman will face Democrat Nate Zimdars, a production line worker at Saputo Cheese in Alto.

48th Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. Melissa Sargent, D-Madison, is running for the State Senate)

- Madison Alder Samba Baldeh won a competitive 4-way Democratic primary with nearly 50 percent of the vote to succeed Representative Sargent in representing the 48th district. Baldeh is the former President of the Madison Common Council and an IT Project Manager at American Family Insurance Company.

55th Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. Mike Rohrkaste, R-Neenah, not seeking re-election)

- Rachael Cabral-Guevara won the 3-way Republican primary for the opportunity to succeed retiring Representative Mike Rohrkaste with nearly 60 percent of the vote. Cabral-Guevara is a board-certified Family Nurse Practitioner and a licensed Advanced Practice Nurse Prescriber. Cabral-Guevara will face Democrat Dan Schierl on the November ballot. Schierl is a retired worker at a local plastic manufacturing plant.

69th Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. Bob Kulp, R-Stratford, not seeking re-election)

- Republican Donna Rozar captured 53 percent of the vote in the Republican primary to succeed Representative Bob Kulp (R-Stratford). Rozar is medical-surgical RN in the cardiac unit at Marshfield Clinic Hospital and a Wood County supervisor. Rozar will face Democrat Brian Giles in the GOP leaning district.

76th Assembly District (Open Seat, Rep. Chris Taylor, D-Madison, not seeking re-election)

- Francesca Hong won the 7-way Democratic primary with 27 percent of the vote to succeed Representative Chris Taylor in representing this heavily Democratic 76th Assembly District covering downtown Madison. Hong is the co-owner of Morris Ramen Restaurant and co-founder of the Culinary Ladies Collective and Cook It Forward.

90th Assembly District (Rep. Staush Gruszynski, D-Green Bay, incumbent)

- Kristina Shelton of Green Bay defeated one-term incumbent Representative Gruszynski in the Democratic primary with nearly 80 percent of the vote. Gruszynski was the only incumbent on election night to lose. He was forced out of the Assembly Democratic caucus after he sexually harassed a Capitol staffer and the Democratic campaign committee supported the campaign of Shelton contributing over \$124,000.

Republicans currently control both the Wisconsin Senate (18-13, 2 vacancies) and Assembly (63-34, 2 vacancies) and are expected to return to power for the 2021-2022 legislative session. Democrats are working to protect Democratic Governor Tony Evers' line item veto authority by making sure Republicans are unable to amass the two-thirds majority in each chamber (22 seats in the Senate and 63 seats in the Assembly) needed to override a gubernatorial veto.