

WAPA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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A. Partisan Primary Highlights

On September 14, 2004, partisan primary elections were held statewide to determine who will be on the ballot in the November general election. Although all 99 seats in the State Assembly, 16 of the 33 seats in the State Senate, all 8 U.S. House of Representatives seats and one of Wisconsin's two U.S. Senate seats will be filled after the November election, the following summary highlights the results in just a few of the more interesting primary races.¹

U.S. Senate

In the U.S. Senate Republican primary, Tim Michels, a construction executive from Oconomowoc, won in a four-way primary against Russ Darrow, Bob Welch and Bob Lorge. Michels secured 42% of the vote statewide, while Darrow followed with 30%, Welch got 23% and Lorge trailed with 4%.² Michels will face incumbent Senator Russ Feingold (D-Middleton) in November.

U.S. House of Representatives

In U.S. House primaries, Jeff Thomas (D-Janesville) will face incumbent Paul Ryan (R-Janesville) in the 1st District, and Dave Magnum (R-Pardeeville) will face incumbent Tammy Baldwin (D-Madison) in District 2. Gerald Boyle (R-Milwaukee) will run against Gwen Moore (D-Milwaukee) for the 4th Congressional District seat vacated by current Congressman Jerry Kleczka (D). Bryan Kennedy (D-Glendale) will compete with incumbent James Sensenbrenner (R-Menomonee) for the seat in the 5th District.

Wisconsin State Senate

The most watched State Senate primary was probably the 20th District, currently held by Senate Majority Leader Mary Panzer (R-West Bend). State Representative Glenn Grothman (R-West Bend) defeated Panzer by a 4 to 1 margin, leaving the Senate Republicans without a leader. Accordingly, the Senate Republican caucus is expected to meet on Friday, September 15th to elect a new majority leader.

In other State Senate primaries, former State Senator Gary Drzewiecki (R-Pulaski) defeated David Steffan in the Republican primary. Drzewiecki will now face incumbent Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) in November in the 30th Senate District. Former State Senator Alice Clausing (D-Menomonie) was defeated by Gary Bakke (D-New

¹ For a complete list of statewide race returns, go to <http://www.wispolitics.com/index.html?Article=23524> on the Internet.

² Percentages based on 97% of polling places reporting.

Richmond) in the 10th Senate District. Bakke will run against incumbent Republican Sheila Harsdorf (River Falls), who did not have an opponent in the primary.

In the 16th Senate District, vacated by Democrat Chuck Chvala (the Senator who has held that seat since 1984), current State Representative Mark Miller (D-Monona) soundly defeated current State Representative Tom Hebl (D-Sun Prairie). State Representative Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) won the Democratic primary in the 4th State Senate District, vacated by Gwen Moore. Luther Olsen (R-Berlin) won the Republican primary in the 14th State Senate District.

Wisconsin State Assembly

On the Assembly side, the Republican incumbent in the 99th Assembly District, Mickey Lehman (R-Hartford), was defeated by Don Pridemore also of Hartford by a narrow 44% to 41.5% margin. Democratic incumbent Frank Boyle of Superior defeated challenger Dick Pukema 55.8% to 44.3% in the 73rd Assembly District. Dane County Clerk, Joe Parisi (D-Madison), beat Amy Dixon in the Democratic primary in the 48th Assembly District and will now face Dan Long (R-Monona) in November.

B. Senate Select Committee on State-Local Government Relations Meets

On Tuesday, August 31, 2004, the Senate Committee on State-Local Government Relations, chaired by Senator Ron Brown (R-Eau Claire), met and took testimony from a number of invited speakers.

At the beginning of the meeting, Senator Brown briefly addressed the attendees and indicated that this was the first in a series of meetings at which the Committee will gather ideas from interested parties with regard to changes that should be made to the statutory framework that defines the relationship between state and local units of government. Senator Brown stated that he hopes to have a legislative package drafted by December 2004. He expects this package to propose changes to “remove speed bumps and untangle large knots” in state-local government relations. His goals include assisting local units of government with delivering services in a more cost effective manner.

The following individuals were invited to testify before the Committee at the August 31st meeting: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Dan Elsass, UW Extension Local Government Center; League of Wisconsin Municipalities; Don Kettl, Prof. of Public Affairs and Political Science and Chair of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on State and Local Partnerships for the 21st Century; Milwaukee Police Association; Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary DATCP; Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin, Inc.; Tim Sheehy, President, Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce and Chair of the Governor's Task Force on State and Local Government; Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance; University of Wisconsin System; Wisconsin Alliance of Cities; Wisconsin Association of School Boards; Wisconsin Counties Association; Wisconsin Education Association Council; Wisconsin Professional Police Association; and Wisconsin Towns Association.

Although the first meeting was limited to invited speakers only, Senator Brown has scheduled another meeting for September 22, 2004, at 2:00 p.m. (Room 411-S State Capitol). At that meeting, the committee will hear *public* testimony related to the statutory relationship between the state and local units of government and will listen to

suggested methods for controlling costs and reducing the tax burden on individuals, families and businesses.

C. First Meeting of Municipal Annexation Committee Scheduled

The Legislative Council Special Committee on Municipal Annexation has announced that its first meeting will be held on October 12th, at 10:00 a.m. in room 412-E, State Capitol. The Committee will spend the first half-hour of the meeting on organizational matters. Then, beginning at 10:30, the Committee will hold a public hearing in which interested persons may make specific recommendations on revising annexation and related statutes to reduce conflicts and costs. This Committee is chaired by Senator Alan Lasee, a Republican from DePere.