



November 7, 2012

Wisconsin Election Update

- ***Wisconsin Returns to a Republican State Senate Majority***
- ***State Assembly Remains Solidly Republican***
- ***Several Legislative Races Still Pending***
- ***Preliminary 2013 – 2015 Legislators by Technical College District resource linked [HERE](#).***

- ***Western Technical College Voters Approve \$80 Million Referendum!***

With several races still close enough to trigger potential recounts, it is clear Wisconsin will inaugurate a Republican majority in both the state Assembly and Senate on January 7, 2013. The new session will then run through 2014, to be dominated out of the starting blocks by a 2013-15 biennium budget bill introduced by Governor Scott Walker in early February, just 4 to 5 weeks after the new session begins.

A preliminary new 2013-2015 Legislators by Technical College District resource is available [HERE](#). It reflects the election results as of mid-day Wednesday, November 7th, and notes the races yet to be determined.

Note that the document for the first time places legislators-elect into their new district numbers for each technical college. Many of these district boundaries have changed significantly with decennial redistricting. This means that familiar incumbents who were elected yesterday may newly cover portions of a college district, or may no longer cover portions of a college district.

Wisconsin Senate

(17 Republicans, 15 Democrats, 1 race pending)

The Senate will likely have an 18-15 Republican majority with one race that may be subject to recount. In the lower Fox Valley, challenger Rick Gudex (R-Fond du Lac) leads incumbent Jessica King (D-Oshkosh) by 590 votes on more than 85,000 votes

cast. Assuming Gudex's lead holds in any recount, the Senate will be split with 18 Republicans and 15 Democrats. A recall shift to incumbent Jessica King would change the Senate dynamic significantly, even though Republicans would maintain a 17-16 majority. A one-vote majority creates a dynamic allowing any one member of the majority to stop or pass bills absent bipartisan support. This was demonstrated last session when Dale Schultz, R-Richland Center, was the key to whether major bills such as a mining bill would proceed in the 17-16 majority. In contrast, while a two-vote majority does not assure uniform voting in the majority caucus, it gives the leadership room to lose any one single member and still pass legislation without help across the aisle.

In other Senate results:

Among this year's races, no other Senate incumbent was unseated other than the presumed defeat of Jessica King by Rick Gudex.

One Senate vacancy remains in the Waukesha area. Yesterday, two seated Assembly members competed in a Republican primary to replace Rich Zipperer, who recently left the Senate to join the Walker Administration. As of mid-day Wednesday, Representative Paul Farrow, R-Pewaukee, appears to have beaten Representative Chris Kapenga, R-Delafield, to win the party primary for this senate seat. Without exception, observers have seen Tuesday's primary contest as picking the new Senator in this heavily Republican district. The upcoming special election to fill this vacant seat on December 4th is seen largely as a formality.

The rest of the Senate

All "even" numbered Senate districts were on the ballot yesterday. "Odd" numbered districts are at the mid-term of the 4-year Senate election cycle.

Wisconsin will have two new freshmen Senators. In the Nicolet area, Tom Tiffany, R-Hazelhurst, beat Susan Sommer, D-Phelps, to flip the 12th Senate District from "D" to "R." This seat was held by Jim Holperin, D-Conover, who retired.

In the Milwaukee area, newcomer Nikiya Harris, D-Milwaukee, was elected to replace Spencer Coggs. Coggs departed the Senate when he was elected Milwaukee's City Treasurer.

All of the other Senate incumbents on the ballot were reelected yesterday: Republicans Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay), Alberta Darling (R-River Hills), Sheila Harsdorf (R-River Falls), Luther Olsen (R-Ripon), Glenn Grothman (R-West Bend), and Mary Lazich (R-New Berlin); and Democrats Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee), Mark Miller (D-Monona), Bob Wirch (D-Pleasant Prairie), Julie Lassa (D-Stevens Point), Fred Risser (D-Madison), Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay), and Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse).

Wisconsin Assembly

(58 Republicans, 38 Democrats, 3 races pending)

All 99 Assembly seats were on yesterday's ballots. Based on what we know as of mid-day today, the Assembly stands at 58 Republicans and 38 Democrats, with 3 races still subject to recounts:

- In the Mid-State area, incumbent Amy Sue Vruwink (D-Milladore) leads challenger Nancy Vandermeer (R-Tomah) by 168 votes.
- Also in the Mid-State area, incumbent Scott Krug (R-Wisconsin Rapids) leads challenger Justin Pluess (D-Wisconsin Rapids) by 159 votes.
- In the Chippewa Valley area, incumbent Warren Petryk (R-Eleva) leads challenger Jeff Smith (D-Eau Claire) by 500 votes.

Three Assembly incumbents were defeated yesterday:

- Joe Knilans (R-Janesville) fell to challenger Debra Kolste (D-Janesville);
- Roger Rivard (R-Rice Lake) fell to challenger Stephen Smith (D-Shell Lake); and
- Andy Jorgensen (D-Fort Atkinson) beat Evan Wynn (R-Whitewater) in a race that pitted two incumbents against each other because of redistricting,

Another Large Class of Assembly Freshmen

There will be at least 24 new Assembly Freshmen – split evenly with 12 Democrats and 12 Republicans – to be inaugurated on January 7th. This does not include the pending races. Newly elected members are noted in “bold” text in the linked resource document. This large class follows a large 2010 class of more than 20 new members.

One Assembly Vacancy Ahead

Both of the incumbent Waukesha-area Assembly members competing for the open Zipperer Senate seat in a primary yesterday were also re-elected to their respective Assembly positions. Paul Farrow (R-Pewaukee) narrowly beat Chris Kapenga (R-Delafield). Kapenga returns to continue serving in the Assembly. After the special general election in early December, Farrow will presumably become the new Senator and will vacate his Assembly seat, leaving it to be filled by a later special election.

All of the results reported here and in the linked document will be checked against the official election results in coming days. Additional analysis and updates will follow in the near future. In the meantime, you are welcome to contact the Association office for additional election information.

Western Voters Approve Historic Referendum!

Voters approved a \$79.6 million referendum in the Western Technical College District on Tuesday. With all precincts reporting, the measure passed on a 54% to 46% margin. Approximately 118,000 voters weighed in across the 11 county college district. The funding will go towards upgrading and improving four key La Crosse Campus facilities: the Coleman Center, Kumm Center, Integrated Technology Center, and the Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technician Center. It will also help fund a new greenhouse and parking ramp. The measure was by far the largest in district history and is among the largest ever statewide.

Congratulations and thanks to the residents of Western's district on this important investment in the region's future educational opportunity, prosperity and job growth!

This report was prepared by Paul Gabriel for the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association. Any analysis or opinion in the report is exclusively the author's.