

CAPITOL UPDATE

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

FALL, 2006

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Election Overview	1
Marriage Amendment	1
Death Penalty Vote	2
State Budget Update	2
Joint Finance Mem- bers Named	2
Legislative Leaders Named	4

November 7th Election Overview



The November election saw gains for Democrats in Wisconsin and nationwide as they re-elected Governor Doyle, took control of the State Senate, narrowed the Republican majority in the Assembly, and took control of both the House and Senate in Washington D.C. In addition to retaining control of the Assembly, Republicans will take over the Attorney General's office after J.B. Van Hollen defeated Democrat Kathleen Falk.

Democrats now control the State Senate with a majority of 18-15. Four seats held by Republicans last session are now in the hands of Democrats with three Republican incumbents losing their seats and the one open seat going Democratic. Incumbents that lost were Dave Zien, Ron Brown and Tom Reynolds, who were defeated by Pat Kreitlow, Kathleen Vinehout and Jim Sullivan respectively. Representative John Lehman (D-Racine) defeated William McReynolds in the Racine-area open seat that was previously held by Cathy Stepp.

Democrats made greater gains in the Assembly than expected by picking up eight seats, narrowing the Republican majority from 60-39 last session to 52-47 in the 2007-08 legislative session.

Five Republican incumbents lost their seats. They are Mark Pettis, Gabe Loeffelholz, Steve Freese, Judy Krawczyk, and Rob Kreibich. Democrats also picked-up two of the ten open seats that were held by Republicans last session (37th and 54th districts).

Here are the results in all districts that will have a new representative in the 2007-08 legislative session:

- District 6: Republican **Gary Tauchen**—12,019 (59.8%), Democrat Richard Lieffring—8,064 (40.2%) This open seat was held by John Ainsworth (R-Shawano).
- District 23: Republican **Jim Ott**—13,308 (56%), Democrat Stanley Teplin—10,438 (44%). This open seat was held by Curt Gielow (R-Mequon).

Marriage Amendment Passes

Wisconsin voters approved the so-called marriage amendment by a wide margin of 59.4% to 40.6%. The amendment, which the WJC opposed, now becomes part of the Wisconsin constitution.

Nationwide, eight states voted on amendments to ban same sex marriage: Colorado, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin approved them. But, Arizona became the first state to defeat this type of amendment. Similar amendments have passed previously in all 20 states to consider them.

Continued on Page 3

Voters Pass Death Penalty Referendum

On November 7, Wisconsin voters approved the advisory referendum on the death penalty by a 55.5% to 44.5%. The WJC and many others in the faith community opposed passage.

The measure has no binding effect but may be used by death penalty proponents to push legislation in the future. However, with Jim Doyle re-elected as Governor and the Wisconsin Senate led by Democrats it is highly unlikely that a death penalty bill will have any chance of success in the next two-year legislative session.

State Budget Process Underway

The process of developing the state's 2007-2009 biennial budget formally began in mid-September when state agencies submitted their requests and recommendations to the Department of Administration (DOA). The DOA is working closely with the Governor's office to consider the agency requests and develop the Governor's budget proposal. The Governor's budget will be released in February and sent to the Legislature as proposed legislation. It will be referred to the Joint Committee on Finance, which will hold public hearings and begin the process of amending and passing its own version of the budget during the spring. Usually the budget is passed by the full legislature in late-June or early-July and sent back to the Governor for his review and vetoes.

The WJC will monitor the budget closely and advocate for key issues, such as Family Care expansion, preserving Medicaid benefits and increasing elderly and disabled transportation funding. As usual, this will be a tight budget. Recent state estimates show that projected tax revenue falls \$1.6 billion short of agency requests.

Joint Finance Committee Members Named

Membership of the powerful Joint Committee on Finance is set. With the Democrats now in the majority in the Senate, the 16-member committee will be split 8-8 during the 2007-08 legislative session. Republicans controlled the committee, 12-4, last session.

Senate Majority Leader Judy Robson has named Senator Russ Decker (D-Schofield) as Co-Chair. Decker has served on the Finance Committee since 1995. Joining Senator Decker are Senators Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay); Bob Jauch (D-Poplar); Mark Miller (D-Madison); Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) and Senator-elect John Lehman (D-Racine).

Senate Minority Leader Scott Fitzgerald appointed Senators Luther Olsen (R-Ripon) and Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) to the committee. Both Senators served on the committee last session.

On the Assembly side, Speaker Mike Huebsch (R-West Salem) named Representative Kitty Rhoades (R-Hudson) as Co-Chair. In addition, Huebsch named Representative Dan Meyer (R-Eagle River) as Vice-Chair. State Representatives Jeff Stone (R-Greendale), Steve Kestell (R-Elkhart Lake), Scott Suder (R-Abbotsford) and Robin Vos (R-Caledonia) round out the Assembly Republicans on the committee. Kestell, Suder and Vos have not served on Joint Finance in the past.

Minority Leader Jim Kreuser (D-Kenosha) named the two Assembly Democrats that served on the committee last session: Representatives Mark Pocan (D-Madison) and Pedro Colon (D-Milwaukee).

November Elections

Continued from Page 1

- District 28: Democrat **Ann Hraychuck**—10,450 (50.7%), Republican Mark Pettis (incumbent)—10,150 (49.3%).
- District 29: Republican **John Murtha**—10,472 (51.7%), Democrat Kerry Kittel—9,776 (48.3%). This open seat was held by Andy Lamb (R- Menomonie).
- District 37: Democrat **Andy Jorgensen**—11,028 (50.2%), Republican Greg Gasper—9,942 (45.2%), Independent Ivan Davis—1,003 (4%). This open seat was held by David Ward (R-Fort Atkinson).
- District 40: Republican **Kevin Peterson**—10,430 (52.4%), Democrat Dan Naylor—9,485 (47.6%). This open seat was held by Jean Hundertmark (R-Clintonville), who ran for Lieutenant Governor.
- District 43: Democrat **Kim Hixson**—10,330 (50%), Republican Debi Towns (incumbent)—10,292 (50%).
- District 49: Democrat **Phil Garthwaite**—9,281 (51.2%), Republican Gabe Loeffelholz (incumbent)—8,297 (45.8), Independent John Murphy—547 (3%).
- District 51: Democrat **Steve Hilgenberg**—11,182 (53.5%), Republican Steve Freese (incumbent)—9,719 (46.5%).
- District 54: Democrat **Gordon Hintz**—13,353 (62.2%), Republican Julie Pung Leschke—8,111 (37.8%). This open seat was held by Gregg Underheim (R-Oshkosh).
- District 56: Republican **Roger Roth**—15,591 (59.1%), Democrat Susan Garcia Franz—10,788 (40.0%). This open seat was held by Terri McCormick (R-Appleton), who lost to John Gard in the Republican primary for the 8th Congressional district.
- District 62: Democrat **Cory Mason**—10,031 (52.4), Republican Van Wanggaard—9,363 (47.6%). This open seat was held by John Lehman (D-Racine), who won his race for the 21st Senate district.
- District 88: Democrat **Jim Soletski**—8,927 (50.2%), Republican Judy Krawczyk (incumbent)—8,849 (49.8%).
- District 89: Republican **John Nygren**—11,848 (54.2%), Democrat Randy Koehn—10,016 (45.8%). This open seat was held by John Gard, who ran for the 8th Congressional district.
- District 93: Democrat **Jeff Smith**—11,878 (50.7%), Republican Rob Kreibich (incumbent)—11,562 (49.3%).
- District 97: Republican **Bill Kramer**—10,651 (55.8%), Democrat Steven Schmuki—8,421 (44.2%). This open seat was held by Ann Nischke (R-Waukesha).
- District 98: Republican **Rich Zipperer**—19,188 (71%), Democrat Sterling Lynk—7,837 (29%). This open seat was held by Scott Jensen (R-Waukesha).



Wisconsin Legislative Leadership 2007-2008

Chair: Joel Pittelman
Co-Chair: Mark Laufman

Past Chairs:
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Adrian Cohen
Robert Friebert
James Fromstein
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Assembly

Speaker: Mike Huebsch (R-West Salem)

Speaker Pro Tempore: Mark Gottlieb (R-Port Washington)

Majority Leader: Jeff Fitzgerald (R-Horicon)

Assistant Majority Leader: Mark Gundrum (R-New Berlin)

Minority Leader: Jim Kreuser (D-Kenosha)

Assistant Minority Leader: Jon Richards (D-Milwaukee)

Republican Caucus Chair: Mark Honadel (R-South Milwaukee)

Republican Caucus Vice-Chair: Pat Strachota (R-West Bend)

Democratic Caucus Chair: Tony Staskunas (D-West Allis)

Senate

Senate President: Fred Risser (D-Madison)

President Pro Tempore: Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee)

Majority Leader: Judy Robson (D-Beloit)

Assistant Majority Leader: Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay)

Minority Leader: Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau)

Assistant Minority Leader: Joseph Leibham (R-Sheboygan)

Democratic Caucus Chair: Mark Miller (D-Madison)

Democratic Caucus Vice-Chair: Jeff Plale (D-South Milwaukee)

Republican Caucus Chair: Glenn Grothman (R-West Bend)

THE WISCONSIN JEWISH CONFERENCE:

- *Serves as a clearinghouse to address important public policy issues*
- *Actively continues efforts to preserve the separation of church and state*
- *Works with local communities to respond to acts of discrimination and anti-Semitic incidents*
- *Monitors legislative activity and engage in coalition building*