

Dem Schachtner wins 10th SD special election

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Dem Patty Schachtner won a special election for the Republican-leaning 10th SD Tuesday as Dems immediately sought to portray her upset victory over GOP Rep. Adam Jarchow as a sign a wave is headed toward Wisconsin this fall.

But Schachtner said in a phone interview she believes local issues drove the race and she ran a “good, clean Wisconsin values campaign.”

“People are worried,” she said. “Yeah, the stock market is high. But if you’re the middle-income person that’s struggling to get by, they’re looking for ways to help them get a step up. We have to look around here at getting higher paying jobs.”

Jarchow, of Balsam Lake, did not immediately return a call seeking comment. But he posted messages on Twitter and Facebook late Tuesday conceding and congratulating Schachtner, the St. Croix County medical examiner.

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“I just called Patty Schachtner and congratulated her on her victory tonight,” Jarchow wrote on Twitter. “I look forward to working with her as our new state Senator. Thank you to all who worked so hard for our campaign.”

Numbers compiled by Senate Dems had Schachtner at 55 percent of the vote. She will now fill out the remainder of Sheila Harsdorf’s term, which runs through 2020, before she’d face the voters again. Harsdorf, R-River Falls, resigned the seat last month to become DATCP secretary.

Schachtner’s win puts the GOP majority in the Senate at 18-14 with a vacancy in the 1st SD, which covers an area south and east of Green Bay and the Door County peninsula.

The district has been a Dem target in recent cycles, but Republicans held onto it for a variety of reasons. In addition to Harsdorf's deep ties to the district, it is covered by the Twin Cities media market, which makes it expensive for TV ads, and is expansive, which makes it difficult to cover on doors.

Harsdorf, who first took the seat in 2000, won re-election to the northwestern Wisconsin district in 2016 with 63.2 percent of the vote. It's a district Donald Trump won by 17.1 points in 2016 and fellow Republican Mitt Romney took by 6.4 points in 2012.

Dems got outside help from groups such as the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, which put \$10,000 into digital ads backing Schachtner. Dems also sought to focus their efforts on targeting their voters through digital ads, doors and calls.

Jarchow, meanwhile, saw several groups come in on his behalf on radio as well as through digital ads and trying to turn out voters. That includes a radio ad from the Republican State Leadership Committee that said she was sued by her school district for lunch expenses she'd "pushed off" on taxpayers.

The State Senate Democratic Committee said Schachtner's husband was injured, wasn't working and the family fell behind on school lunch payments.

Schachtner said Tuesday the negative ads backfired.

"Kindness counts," she said.

Gov. Scott Walker, who is up for re-election this fall, sent a [series of tweets](#) following Tuesday's results calling Schachtner's win a wake-up call for Republicans.

Dems also pointed to the results in the 58th AD as evidence enthusiasm is up on their side, even though Washington County Board Chair Rick Gundrum won with 56.6 percent of the vote over Dem Dennis Degenhardt.

Romney won the Washington County seat with 67.7 percent of the vote in 2012, while Trump took it with 66.1 percent in 2016.

In the 66th AD, Dem Greta Neubauer was unopposed to fill the heavily Dem seat left vacant by the resignation of Cory Mason to become Racine mayor.

Gundrum and Neubauer's wins put the GOP majority in the Assembly at 63-35 with one vacancy.

*Listen to a December interview with Schachtner:

https://soundcloud.com/wispolitics/171208_schachtner/s-GIFrr