

WisDems: Democrats triumph in special elections

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MADISON — Today Wisconsin held three special elections. The results from three very different districts prove this point: Democratic values and priorities are also Wisconsin values and priorities.

Tonight's results are a show of strength for Democrats. The gains our great candidates made in traditionally Republican territory are further proof of the growing Democratic wave building here in Wisconsin and across the country. Republicans who have given tax breaks to billionaires while yanking away health care from people who desperately need it are out-of-touch with what helps us all do better.

President Donald Trump—along with Speaker Paul Ryan and Gov. Scott Walker who support and prop him up—are toxically unpopular and divisive. Republicans focus on ultra-wealthy donors, rather than opening doors to opportunities and building strong communities for the rest of us.

Below is background information and statements on each election from Martha Laning, Chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin.

State Senate District 10

2016 State Senate Results: Odeen (D) – 37% Harsdorf (R) – 63%

2016 Presidential Results: Clinton (D) – 38% Trump (R) – 55%

Senate District 10 has long been a Republican-leaning district, previously held by Republican State Sen. Sheila Harsdorf for 16 years. The race was an uphill battle given the percentages and the amount of money pouring in from conservative

special interests. However, Democratic Party of Wisconsin strongly backed the campaign of Democrat Patty Schachtner.

Tonight, we saw Patty overcome the odds and win a red district with 55% of the vote. The following is a statement from Martha Laning on these results:

“We are thrilled to welcome Senator-elect Patty Schachtner to the Wisconsin State Senate! Tonight is, first and foremost, a victory for the people of Wisconsin.

“Patty put the people in her district first, and the voters responded. This proves that our Democratic values such as expanding health care, funding our public schools and protecting our air, drinking water and natural environment are truly Wisconsin values. Patty will be a tireless advocate for the people of Western Wisconsin and for these shared values.

“The results from tonight prove that the blue wave we’re seeing across the nation is gaining momentum in Wisconsin and is only getting stronger. We are more fired up than ever to take back our state for the people. Despite this being a district pundits thought we had little chance to win and despite lavish spending by Republicans and special-interest donors, Democratic Party of Wisconsin and all our blue allies invested in this uphill battle and those investments paid off. Tonight’s results send a clear message: Every seat is up for grabs in 2018.”

Assembly District 58

2016 State Assembly Results: Gannon (R) – 100%

2016 Presidential Results: Clinton (D) – 28% Trump (R) – 67%

Assembly District 58 is a Republican stronghold, as evidenced by Clinton’s numbers and the fact that a Democrat has not run for Assembly there for the past decade, excluding tonight’s special election. Despite overwhelming GOP makeup of the district, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin was proud to support the campaign of Democrat Dennis Degenhardt.

Tonight, we saw Dennis Degenhardt take an amazing 43% of the vote in his district, a stunning 18 point overperformance for a Democrat in a deeply red district. The following is a statement from Martha Laning on these results:

“Tonight is a historic night. In a heavily Republican district where 28% of voters cast ballots for Secretary Clinton, Dennis Degenhardt massively outperformed all

expectations. The Democratic blue wave has reached even the reddest of districts.

“Dennis’s numbers are a win in that tonight’s massive swing proves that Wisconsin voters are ready to rebuild our crumbling roads, to invest in our schools and to bring quality, affordable health care to every person in every corner of our state.

“We would like to invite our Republican colleagues to join us in advancing the values that carried Dennis to a historic victory tonight. We would also like to offer congratulations to Representative-elect Rick Gundrum, we wish you success in meeting the needs of your constituents and all of Wisconsin.”

Assembly District 66

2016 State Assembly Results: Mason (D) – 81% Meyers (Lib) – 19%

2016 Presidential Results: Clinton (D) – 72% Trump (R) – 28%

Assembly District 66 leans Democratic. It’s worth noting that, while Democrats contested the heavily Republican Assembly District 58, Republicans declined to even field a challenger against Democrat Greta Neubauer.

Tonight, we saw Greta’s victory made official. The following is a statement from Martha Laning on these results:

“We are very pleased to welcome Rep.-elect Greta Neubauer to the State Assembly. It’s great to see such a strong advocate for our environment and the rights of Wisconsin’s workers step into a leadership position in her community. I look forward to the fantastic work Greta will do on behalf of her constituents and all of Wisconsin.”