

Laning thanks activists, candidates who ran in tough districts for work in '18

Posted on Sunday, Jun 2, 2019

Outgoing state Chair Martha Laning on Saturday thanked activists for their work in 2018 as well as the candidates who ran for the Legislature despite “rigged” maps, saying both were key to the party sweeping statewide elections last fall.

She also urged activists to stay engaged for 2020, when the national party is bringing the convention to Milwaukee and Wisconsin is expected to be a key swing state in the presidential race.

Laning said when she became chair, the key question was: How to do more with less? Laning said she knew the party would be out-raised by Republicans. But she told activists it doesn't matter how much is spent on commercials because there are two non-negotiables in any campaign: a great candidate and strong grassroots. She said Dems had both.

Still, she said Dems didn't win all the races they deserved to “because Republicans rigged the system,” drawing a boo from the crowd.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

She said those who ran despite districts that were tilted against them helped drive more people to the polls and contributed to the party's wins at the top of the ticket.

“Candidates who stepped up to run in races they knew they were unlikely to win are heroes to our party,” Laning said.

Laning, who opted against seeking re-election after two terms, urged the party to come together after Sunday's election for her successor between state Rep. David

Bowen, of Milwaukee, and former MoveOn.org senior adviser Ben Wikler.

“We all need to be pulling in the same direction if we are to succeed,” she said.