

# Neubauer concedes in Supreme Court race

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Lisa Neubauer on Wednesday conceded to Brian Hagedorn, dropping the possibility of seeking a recount in their razor-close race to become the state's next Supreme Court justice.

Hagedorn emerged from the Election Day count with a lead of 5,960 votes on his fellow appeals court judge, and the next day Neubauer pledged to ensure "every last vote is counted" in the race.

Still, a WisPolitics.com check of the county canvasses showed little change as 55 counties finished their final tallies by Tuesday afternoon. Those results added slightly to Hagedorn's advantage.

Neubauer said she called Hagedorn Wednesday morning to wish him well.

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"Judge Hagedorn said that he was running to get partisan influences out of our courts, and I hope he lives up to his promise," Neubauer said. "Our courts are strongest when politics are set aside and we follow the law regardless of personal views."

In a message to supporters, Hagedorn said he was "deeply humbled and grateful." He said throughout the campaign he said a justice should "say what the law is, not what the law should be," that partisan politics have no place at the court and he would uphold the constitution as written.

"I meant every word, and I will endeavor to fulfill these promises with all my ability," Hagedorn said.

Hagedorn will replace longtime liberal Justice Shirley Abrahamson, expanding the conservative majority on the court to 5-2.

Neubauer spokesman Tyler Hendricks said she won't run for the state Supreme Court next year, when conservative Justice Daniel Kelly is up for a full 10-year term. She instead plans to seek another six-year term to the 2nd District Court of Appeals.

TV numbers shared with WisPolitics.com and a check of filings with the state Ethics Commission detailing independent expenditures show outside groups backing Neubauer outspent those supporting Hagedorn by nearly 2-to-1. Still, Neubauer bemoaned the role of outside money, saying she hoped future races would see less influence from "outside special interests."

The Republican State Leadership Committee's Judicial Fairness Initiative spent more than \$1.2 million over the last week of the race on TV, digital ads, mail and other advertising backing Hagedorn.

"With more than \$1 million poured in against me with false and misleading attacks in the final week alone, it's not hard to imagine that is what made the difference," Neubauer said.