

# Testin, included in NRCC poll, passing on race against Kind

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State Sen. Pat Testin was the “named Republican candidate” who was neck-and-neck with Dem U.S. Rep. Ron Kind in an NRCC poll released last month, but the lawmaker says he is focused on re-election to the state Senate in 2020.

The National Republican Congressional Committee declined to release the identity of the Republican it matched against Kind in the poll, which was seen as part of an effort to suggest the longtime congressman was vulnerable. But so far, no Republicans have stepped forward to challenge the La Crosse Dem.

Testin, R-Stevens Point, said he was encouraged to challenge Kind, D-La Crosse, by U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Weston, as well as the National Republican Congressional Committee.

A source told WisPolitics.com that Testin was the candidate matched against Kind in the survey, and the lawmaker confirmed he was included in the poll.

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“There were a few calls made,” Testin told WisPolitics.com. “But as flattering as it is to be considered as a congressional candidate, I’m focused on my re-election for next year.”

Kind was tabbed as a possible GOP target for 2020 after Donald Trump won his district in 2016 as the La Crosse Dem was unopposed. Last year, Kind won his 12th term with 59.7 percent of the vote, and he had \$2.6 million in the bank at the end of June.

Testin, meanwhile, is one of the few Dem targets for 2020 in the state Senate.

He knocked off then-Dem Sen. Julie Lassa, of Stevens Point, in 2016 as Trump did well in northern Wisconsin. Since then, he has been fundraising at a significant clip for a freshman and reported \$200,005 at the end of June. That was second in the Senate only to Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, who had \$458,325 stashed away.

Then-Gov. Scott Walker won 52.2 percent of the vote in Testin's Senate district last year even as he narrowly lost statewide. Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, won the district with 52.3 percent.

See the NRCC polling memo:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/190722NRCC.pdf>