

Crowley clinging to narrow lead in Milwaukee County exec race, Larson looking at recount

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State Rep. David Crowley was clinging to a narrow lead over state Sen. Chris Larson in the Milwaukee County exec's race, according to unofficial returns late Monday.

Numbers from the Milwaukee Elections Commission had Crowley with a 1,039-vote lead out of nearly 193,000 votes cast, and Larson's campaign said it was weighing a possible recount.

Earlier in the night, media tabulations of the votes showed Crowley with a similar lead with all but three precincts unreported. But those tallies didn't include thousands of absentee ballots that were added later.

Crowley declared victory before the additional absentee ballots were added in as various media outlets projected him as the winner.

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He said in a statement his campaign was based on the idea that he was trying to bring people together across geographic, racial, financial and political lines.

"Tonight's results were the culmination of that goal," Crowley said. "The voters of Milwaukee County showed that they are ready to join together and address the many issues facing our community."

Larson campaign manager Sonja Chojnacki said the campaign still wanted to see additional reviews of the ballots that were counted late. She also noted the numerous issues that arose during the spring race on how absentee ballots were handled.

“We will wake up tomorrow, put our heads together and see where we go with a recount,” she told WisPolitics.com in a phone interview.

Crowley got a significant boost from Leadership Milwaukee, an outside group funded by incumbent County Exec Chris Abele.

The group reported \$782,399 in independent expenditures backing Crowley’s effort against Larson, who lost to Abele in 2016.