

Republican Olsen won't seek reelection to Senate

Posted on Monday, Feb 24, 2020

GOP state Sen. Luther Olsen announced today he won't seek reelection this fall after 26 years in the state Legislature.

Rep. Joan Ballweg, R-Markesan, quickly announced plans to run for the seat. She won the Assembly seat Olsen, R-Ripon vacated in 2004 for his successful bid to join the state Senate.

Olsen served a decade in the state Assembly before winning his Senate race. Often viewed as a moderate voice in the GOP Senate caucus, Olsen has served on the Joint Finance Committee and chaired the Education Committee.

"I have had the opportunity to work with so many talented people in the Legislature, state agencies, interest groups, and on the national stage," [said Olsen](#), who turns 69 on Wednesday. "I am confident these people will continue to work to improve education, promote good and efficient government, and look for the best ways to tackle tomorrow's challenges."

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Olsen beat back a recall challenge in 2011 with 52.1 percent of the vote. He then cruised to reelection in 2012 and 2016 with more than 57 percent of the vote each time.

President Donald Trump won the central Wisconsin district with 58.3 percent of the vote in 2016.

Olsen is the third member of the state Senate to announce retirement plans. Dems Dave Hansen, of Green Bay, and Mark Miller, of Monona, have also announced they won't seek reelection this fall.

