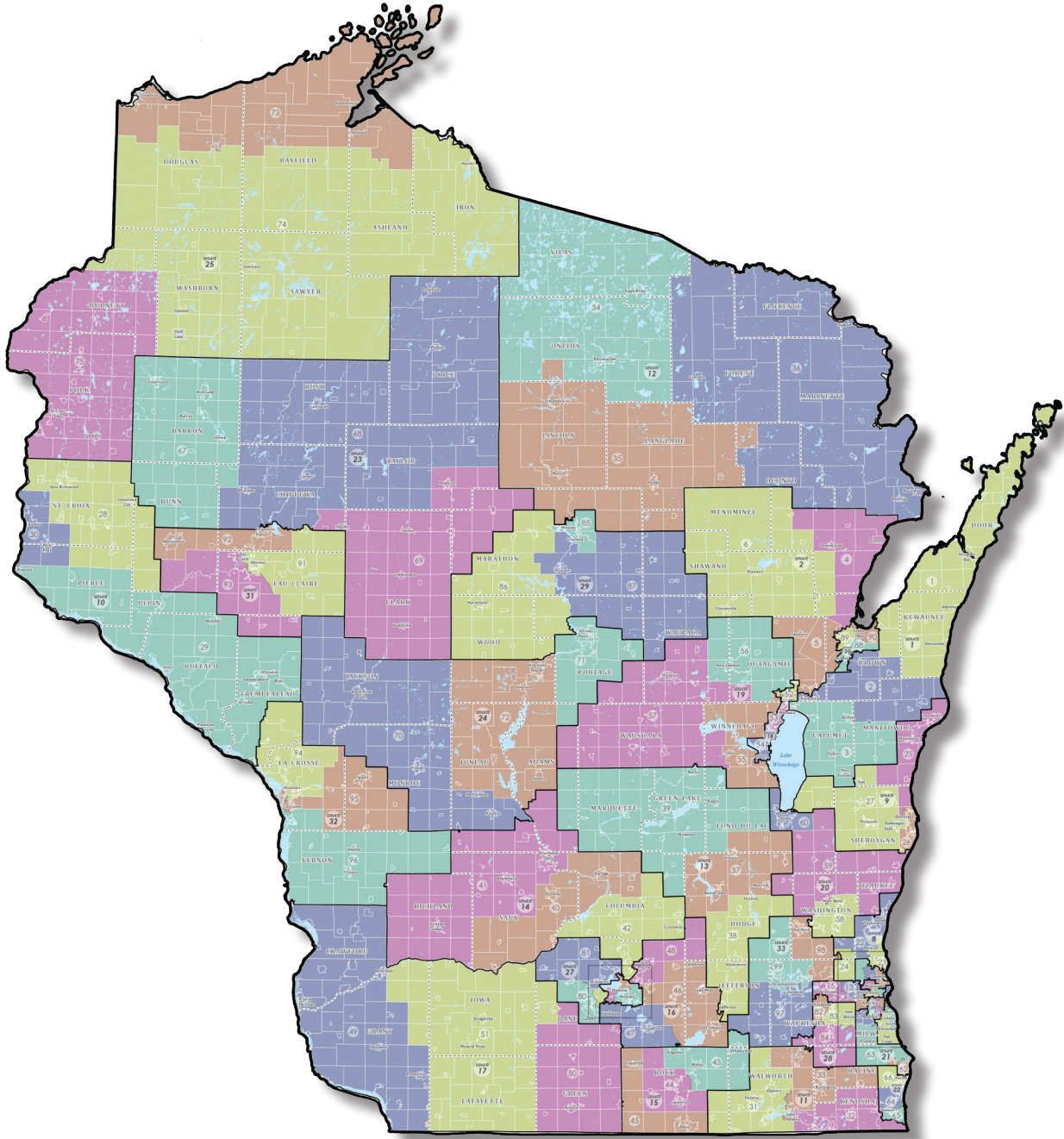




# 2024 Fall Election Guide



## Featuring:

- \*Top legislative races under new maps
- \*Competitive contests for the U.S. Senate and House
- \*Wisconsin as a top presidential battleground & more

REPUBLICANS • DEMOCRATS • INDEPENDENTS • ALL MEDIA MARKETS

# 70% of Wisconsinites Support School Choice



Support for School Choice in Wisconsin is high and getting higher. Opposing education freedom comes at a political cost. **55%** of likely Wisconsin voters **say they'd vote against an opponent of universal school choice**. Scan the QR code to read more data from a scientific poll of likely voters.

[schoolchoicewiaction.org](https://schoolchoicewiaction.org)



**School  
Choice**  
WISCONSIN

*Action*





## Democratic Ticket



### **Kamala Harris**

Born Oct. 20, 1964, in Oakland, California. Graduated from Howard University and UC Law San Francisco. Served as San Francisco district attorney from 2004-2011, then California attorney general from 2011-2017. Elected to U.S. Senate in 2016. Elected vice president in 2020.



### **Tim Walz**

Born April 6, 1964, in West Point, Nebraska. Graduated from the University of Houston. Worked as a teacher and retired after 24 years in the Army National Guard. Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2006 and reelected for five more terms. Elected governor of Minnesota in 2018 and reelected in 2022.

## Republican Ticket



### **Donald Trump**

Born June 14, 1946, in Queens, New York. Graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. Real estate mogul who formerly co-produced and hosted the reality TV series "The Apprentice" from 2004-2015. Elected U.S. president in 2016.



### **JD Vance**

Born Aug. 2, 1984, in Middleton, Ohio. Graduated from Ohio State University and Yale Law School. Served in the U.S. Marines from 2003-2007 and authored a 2016 memoir, "Hillbilly Elogy." Elected to U.S. Senate in 2022.

## Wisconsin once again a top presidential battleground

The race for Wisconsin's 10 electoral votes is in full swing with tens of millions of dollars being spent on the airwaves amid multiple visits by candidates, surrogates and national press.

What's new? After all, the Badger State is a perennial presidential battleground. Four of the past six presidential campaigns in Wisconsin have been decided by less than 23,000 votes each.

But it's a different political landscape after Joe Biden dropped out of the race.

Dem enthusiasm has spiked after Kamala Harris got the party's nomination for president to oppose Donald Trump.

"This campaign has already been shot out of a rocket. Now it's entering warp speed," Wisconsin Democratic Party Chair Ben Wikler said in Chicago at the Democratic National Convention. "I didn't know they had afterburners on this rocket, but you can see the energy that's gonna propel this campaign all the way through to the finish line."

The addition of Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz to the ticket has given Dems hope their party can cut into Republican margins in deep red parts of Wisconsin because of his rural-friendly profile.

Republicans on the other hand are comfortable sending U.S. Sen. JD Vance, R-Ohio, the young running mate of Trump, into the state on a frequent basis.

State GOP Chair Brian Schimming argued voters aren't going to forget Dems' record on inflation and the border.

"While rosy vibes and empty platitudes may excite a liberal audience in Chicago, working families in Wisconsin deserve actual substance and policy from

their candidates," Schimming said. "The sugar-high honeymoon for Democrats coming out of their convention will inevitably run headfirst into the unforgiving reality of their abysmal record."

Playing into the election calculus are all of the other presidential candidates on the ballot. Many Dems remember 2016 as the year Green Party candidate Jill Stein helped beat Hillary Clinton, though historians cite a lot of other factors.

In 2016, Stein received 31,072 votes when she was on the Wisconsin ballot in 2016, more than Donald Trump's 22,748-vote winning margin over Hillary Clinton. The Green Party was blocked from putting a candidate on the 2020 Wisconsin ballot as Biden beat Trump by 20,682 votes.

This year, after some legal tussles, the Wisconsin Elections Commission OK'd eight candidates for Wisconsin's presidential ballot: Harris as the Dem nominee; Trump as the GOP candidate; Stein for the Greens; Randall Terry, of the Constitution Party; and Chase Russell, the Libertarian Party candidate. In addition, independents Cornel West, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Claudia De la Cruz, who is running under the Party for Socialism, will appear on the ballot.

Kennedy, barring a successful lawsuit, will remain a choice despite backing Trump and asking battleground states to take him off the ballot. But there is no mechanism for doing that once a candidate has successfully submitted signatures, commission staff said.

In a close race, the six other candidates on the ballot could affect the outcome.

**Tammy Baldwin (D)**

Born Feb. 11, 1962, in Madison. Graduated from UW-Madison. Worked as a practicing attorney. Elected to the state Assembly 1992-96. Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives 1998-2010 and to U.S. Senate in 2012. Lives in Madison.

**Eric Hovde (R)**

Born April 27, 1964, in Madison. Graduated from UW-Madison. Co-founder of The Hovde Foundation charity, CEO Hovde Properties, and chairman and CEO of Sunwest Bank. Owner of three banks. Lives in Madison.

## Hovde, Baldwin in pitched battle for U.S. Senate

Democrats face an uphill battle to keep control of the U.S. Senate. While not the most vulnerable member, Tammy Baldwin has to keep her seat in any successful scenario for Dems.

And that is why Baldwin and her allies are spending mightily and aggressively in negative ads against Eric Hovde, a Madison businessman, developer and banker.

The wealthy Hovde has been portrayed as a carpetbagger because of his ties to California's Orange County, where he has a house and business interests. And Baldwin ads keep asking "What's wrong with this guy?" referencing quotes from his past, including his failed 2012 campaign for the U.S. Senate.

Hovde lost to former Gov. Tommy Thompson, who then lost to Baldwin in the race for the open seat vacated by Herb Kohl.

In the four weeks after the state's August primary, the spending on the airwaves was fairly even, according to AdImpact. Hovde and his allies had a slight spending advantage, with nearly \$13 million spent, while Baldwin and her backers dropped nearly \$12 million.

But in early September, Baldwin and her allies had a more than 5-to-1 advantage for advance reservations through the November election. Insiders saw that as a sign national GOP groups were weighing whether Wisconsin was a worthwhile investment down the stretch compared to other pickup opportunities around the country.

"While I am running to put Wisconsin families first, my opponent Eric Hovde is a multi millionaire California bank owner who has insulted our seniors, our farmers, our moms, and just about everyone else in our great state," Baldwin said. "While he runs to put the wealthy and well connected like himself first, I will always stand up for the working people of Wisconsin."

Republicans call Baldwin a lifelong politician who has accomplished little.

"All these different ads, none of them have a shred of truth to them. They're all fictitious and lies," Hovde said at a WisPolitics luncheon after he won the GOP primary. "Why don't you debate me? Why don't you get out and talk about issues instead of just making up, you know, silly ads and making false statements?"

Baldwin and Hovde were scheduled to debate each other on Oct. 18 in a meeting hosted by the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association, but Hovde called for the incumbent senator to agree to "multiple debates."

Hovde has declined to say how much of his personal wealth he was willing to spend in the race against Baldwin.

As of August, he had loaned his campaign committee \$13 million, according to FEC filings. Hovde also filed a U.S. Senate financial disclosure in July that shows he has a net worth somewhere between \$195.4 million and \$564.5 million, which would make him one of the richest people in the Senate if he won.

### About this publication

The 2024 Fall Election Guide is a product of WisPolitics.com and was compiled from government and campaign sources.

All information is current as of Sept. 4, 2024.

WisPolitics.com, started in 2000, is a nonpartisan online news organization based in Madison that operates an email news service in addition to the free sites WisBusiness.com, WisOpinion.com and Battleground Wisconsin.

Contact us at (608) 441-8418 or visit [wispolitics.com/contact-us](https://www.wispolitics.com/contact-us)

This publication is copyright © 2024 WisPolitics.com.

Photos of the Wisconsin State Capitol and U.S. Capitol are from the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress.





## Cooke challenges Van Orden in closely watched 3rd CD

If Republicans want to hold onto the House majority, they'll likely have to keep a trio of seats in Wisconsin.

But the one they're most worried about is the 3rd Congressional District in western Wisconsin, now held by the former Navy SEAL, Derrick Van Orden of Prairie du Chien.

The freshman House member got to Congress by winning a 2022 race against state Sen. Brad Pfaff, D-Onalaska, after national Dems pulled out late in the game and shifted money to help incumbents. Allies of the former state agriculture secretary blamed the shift for killing their chances to hold the seat long held by moderate Dem Ron Kind.

Since then, Dems have targeted Van Orden, who instead of being known for his membership on the House Agriculture Committee has drawn attention for a variety of incidents in which he has allegedly insulted students, constituents and members of the Biden-Harris administration.

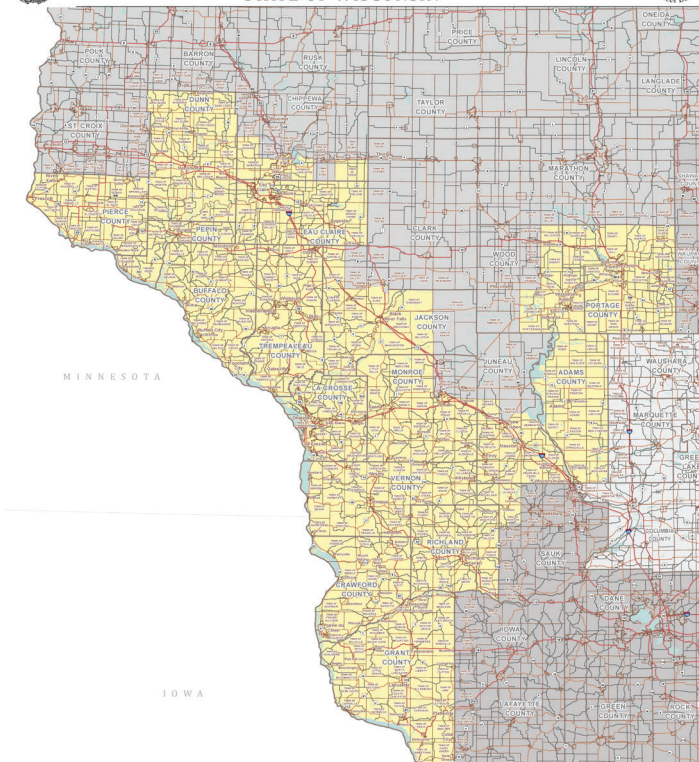
Dem U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, who represents the neighboring 2nd CD around Madison, has dubbed him "Van Orner" and devoted a lot of time in an effort to defeat him. Pocan endorsed and campaigned for state Rep. Katrina Shankland, D-Stevens Point. But Shankland lost in a three-way primary to Rebecca Cooke, a nonprofit leader from Eau Claire on her second run for the seat; Cooke lost to Pfaff and others in a 2022 Dem primary.

Pocan and Dems now have swung behind Cooke and are talking up her chances, especially given the spike in Democratic enthusiasm after Kamala Harris replaced Joe Biden. Republican strategists counter that Van Orden will benefit from being on the ballot with Donald Trump, who will help turn out voters in the rural parts of the district.

Republicans hold a 6-2 margin in the Wisconsin House delegation, with Pocan and Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, as the only Democrats.



**Congressional District 3**  
STATE OF WISCONSIN



Democrats also have their eyes on southeastern Wisconsin's 1st CD and northeastern Wisconsin's 8th CD. But they're fighting more of an uphill battle in those districts.

The 1st has a slight Republican lean. But GOP House member Bryan Steil of Janesville is seen as less vulnerable than Van Orden though Dems like former state Revenue secretary and congressman Peter Barca because of his deep ties in Kenosha.

The 8th is a GOP district, vacated mid-term by Mike Gallagher of Allouez. Tony Wied, who built a chain of convenience stores, is endorsed by Trump. He'll face Dem Kristin Lyerly, an OB-GYN who has attracted a lot of fundraising interest from Dem donors. But the partisan split makes this a tough seat for Dems.



### **Derrick Van Orden (R)**

Born Sept. 15, 1969, in Hennepin County, Minnesota. Retired Navy SEAL senior chief and business consultant. Acted in three films and is an author about his service as a Navy SEAL. Elected to first term in 2022. Lives in Prairie du Chien.



### **Rebecca Cooke (D)**

Born Dec. 21, 1987, in Eau Claire. Graduated from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. Grew up on a dairy farm in Eau Claire and is a small business owner, nonprofit leader and former waitress. Lives in Eau Claire.



## Top races to watch in November legislative elections

In the Assembly, it's about control.

In the Senate, it's about setting the stage for 2026.

Insiders are watching more than a dozen fall races under new maps to see if: Republicans can keep legislative control for another two years; or if Dems can beat the odds and seize control of the Assembly for the first time since 2010 and set the stage for a Senate takeover two years from now.

In the Senate, the calculation is simple. There's no real path for Dems to retake the majority after going into this session down 22-11. But there are four GOP-held seats considered in play.

To create a path in 2026 to flip the chamber, Dems have to pick up at least three of those seats and defend state Sen. Brad Pfaff, D-Onalaska, to have a shot at the majority in two years.

In the Assembly, the puzzle is more complicated.

Republicans went into this session with a 64-35 majority and are expected to see their majority shrink under the new maps.

Longtime GOP redistricting consultant Joe Handrick rates 46 Assembly seats as "safe" or "strong" Republican. He rates 44 seats "safe," "strong" or "lean" Dem. That leaves nine seats that he considers the most competitive.

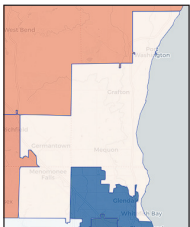
For Republicans, keeping their majority is a matter of winning all 46 that are safe or strong GOP and winning four of the nine remaining seats.

For Dems, it's a matter of winning the 44 safe, strong or lean seats on their side and winning six of the nine.

Below is a list of the legislative races insiders are watching for this fall's election.

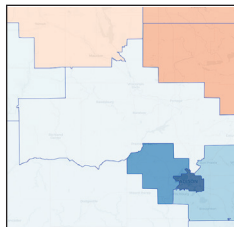
### Races to watch in the Senate

#### 8th SD, Milwaukee area, 51% GOP



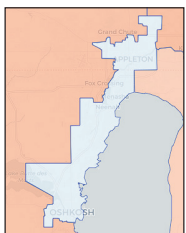
Sen. Duey Stroebel, R-Saukville, vs. trial lawyer Jodi Habush Sinykin, D-Milwaukee.

#### 14th SD, central Wisconsin, 52% Dem



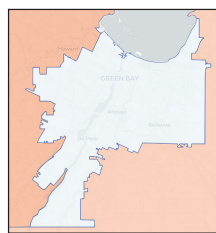
Sen. Joan Ballweg, R-Markesan, vs. mental health counselor Sarah Keyeski, D-Lodi.

#### 18th SD, Fox Valley, 54% Dem



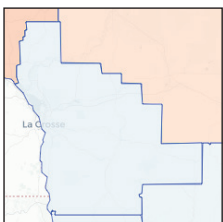
Cancer physician Anthony Phillips, R-Appleton, vs. small business owner and Appleton Common Council member Kristin Alfheim, D-Appleton.

#### 30th SD, Green Bay area, 52% Dem



Allouez Village President Jim Rafter, R-Green Bay, vs. business consultant Jamie Wall, D-Green Bay.

#### 32nd SD, western Wisconsin, 53% Dem



Sen. Brad Pfaff, D-Onalaska, vs. financial representative and Trempealeau County Board Supv. Stacey Klein, R-Trempealeau.

#### Explore district maps

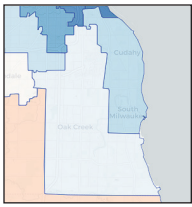
Visit the link below or scan the QR code to view interactive district maps provided by Marquette University Law School research fellow John Johnson.

[https://bit.ly/district\\_maps](https://bit.ly/district_maps)



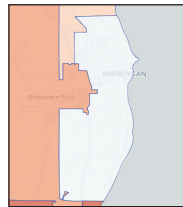
## Races to watch in the Assembly

### 21st AD, Milwaukee area, 53% Dem



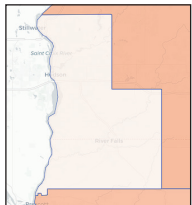
Rep. Jessie Rodriguez, R-Oak Creek, vs. businessman David Marsteller, D-Milwaukee.

### 26th AD, eastern Wisconsin, 52% Dem



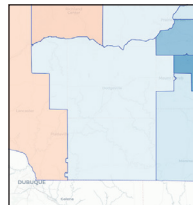
Rep. Amy Binsfeld, R-Sheboygan, vs. former Sheboygan Area School District Superintendent Joe Sheehan, D-Sheboygan.

### 30th AD, western Wisconsin, 51% GOP



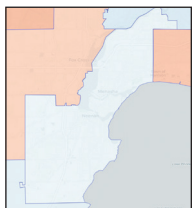
Rep. Shannon Zimmerman, R-River Falls, vs. health care administrator Alison Page, D-River Falls.

### 51st AD, south-central Wisconsin, 54% Dem



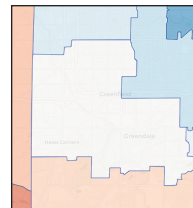
Rep. Todd Novak, R-Dodgeville, vs. real estate agent Elizabeth Grabe, D-Mount Horeb.

### 53rd AD, Fox Valley, 52% Dem



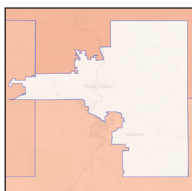
Former state Rep. and former Neenah Mayor Dean Kaufert, R-Neenah, vs. retired environmental safety manager Duane Shukoski, D-Neenah.

### 61st AD, southeastern Wisconsin, 51% Dem



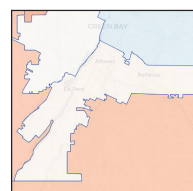
Rep. Bob Donovan, R-Greenfield, vs. former Whitnall School Board member LuAnn Bird, D-Hales Corners.

### 85th AD, north-central Wisconsin, 51% GOP



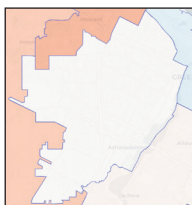
Rep. Pat Snyder, R-Schofield, vs. nonprofit executive Yee Leng Xiong, D-Weston.

### 88th AD, Green Bay area, 50.5% GOP



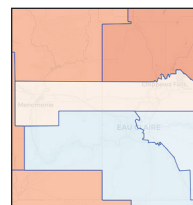
Small business owner and Air Force veteran Benjamin Franklin, R-De Pere, vs. manufacturing executive Christy Welch, D-De Pere.

### 89th AD, Green Bay area, 51% Dem



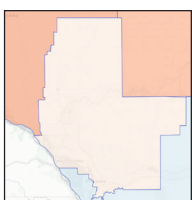
Brown County Board Chair Patrick Buckley, R-Green Bay, vs. Brown County Assistant DA Ryan Spaude, D-Green Bay.

### 92nd AD, western Wisconsin, 52% GOP



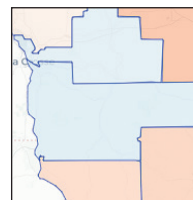
Rep. Clint Moses, R-Menomonie, vs. former state Rep. Joe Plouff, D-Menomonie.

### 94th AD, western Wisconsin, 50-50



Former legislative aide Ryan Huebsch, R-Onalaska, vs. Rep. Steve Doyle, D-Onalaska. Huebsch is son of former Assembly Speaker Mike Huebsch.

### 96th AD, Western Wisconsin, 56% Dem



Rep. Loren Oldenburg, R-Viroqua, vs. former La Crosse County Board Chair Tara Johnson, D-La Crosse.





**The Wisconsin Insurance Alliance is the state's leading property and casualty insurance trade association. Members play a crucial role in safeguarding Wisconsinites.**

- ✓ **VITAL INSURANCE COVERAGE ENSURING FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR INDIVIDUALS BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE IN TIMES OF NEED.**
- ✓ **FINANCING AND RESOURCES TO HELP RESIDENTS RECOVER FROM UNFORESEEN EVENTS.**
- ✓ **CONTRIBUTING TO THE RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING OF WISCONSIN FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES BY OFFERING ESSENTIAL PROTECTION AND SUPPORT.**

**WIA**  
Wisconsin Insurance Alliance



Website:  
**[www.wisinsalliance.com](http://www.wisinsalliance.com)**