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**Incumbents win easily in most Wisconsin partisan primary contests**

*By WisPolitics.com*

Incumbents fared well in the Aug. 11 partisan primary — except for one lawmaker.

Green Bay School Board member Kristina Shelton, aided by a six-figure effort from the Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee, easily knocked off freshman Rep. Staush Gruszynski in a key Democratic primary.

Gruszynski, the only incumbent to lose, was booted from the caucus for sexually harassing a Capitol staffer at a Madison bar.

Unofficial final returns posted at the Brown County Clerk’s website had Shelton at 78.8 percent of the vote as just 971 voters cast their ballots for Gruszynski.

Along with being pushed out of the caucus, Gruszynski was stripped of his committee assignments by Assembly Democratic leaders, who endorsed Shelton.

Gruszynski has said in interviews that since the incident came to light, he has been sober. But some Democrats said they believed Gruszynski downplayed what he did and were also irritated by his stated expectation that he would be reassigned to committees in the coming session if he won.

The Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee took the unusual step of giving in-kind donations to a challenger of an incumbent lawmaker. Shelton’s latest campaign finance reports showed $124,521 in in-kind donations from the caucus, which did mail and radio on her behalf.

Grusynski congratulated Shelton in a post on his campaign Facebook page while bemoaning the “Madison money that poured in.”

“We ran a positive campaign built on our vision for the community. Green Bay is an amazing place to live and has big challenges to meet,” he said. “I wish Kristina nothing but the best in her run in the general election.”

Shelton is set to face Republican Drew Kirsteatter in November for a seat Democrats have won comfortably in recent years.

The other incumbent lawmakers who faced primary challenges easily won their party’s nomination.

Freshman Rep. Marisabel Cabrera, who beat then-Rep. Josh Zepnick of Milwaukee two years ago in the Democratic primary, took 62.3 percent of the vote over Christian Saldivar, a 30-year-old caregiver, according to unofficial returns posted early this morning by the Milwaukee Election Commission.

Cabrera will face Republican Veronica Diaz in November in the Democratic-leaning seat.

Also winning easily were: GOP Reps. John Nygren, of Marinette; Adam Neylon, of Pewaukee; Ken Skowronski, of Franklin; and Robert Brooks, of Saukville.

So did Democratic Reps. Lisa Subeck, of Madison, and Sondy Pope, of Mt. Horeb.

All seven incumbent lawmakers hold seats that are considered safe, and only four of the group will face a challenger in November.

Democratic state Sen. LaTonya Johnson, who won her primary with more than 80 percent of the vote, said the challenge from Michelle Bryant, chief of staff for Democratic Sen. Lena Taylor, was an effort at retaliation.

The Milwaukee Democrat said she believed Bryant jumped into the 6th Senate District primary in retribution after Johnson replaced Taylor on the powerful Joint Finance Committee and chose to endorse longtime Mayor Tom Barrett over Taylor in the Milwaukee mayoral race earlier this year.

“I’m ecstatic that my district stood behind me,” Johnson said.

She is set to face Republican Alciro Deacon for the heavily Democratic seat in November.

In other races:

* Republican Julian Bradley and Democrat Kelda Roys are all but guaranteed to join the state Senate in January after winning their party primaries for open seats. Roys, a former state representative and gubernatorial candidate, will likely take over the Democratic seat long held by Fred Risser of Madison. Bradley will face Democrat Adam Murphy in the heavily GOP 28th Senate District in November; Sen. David Craig, R-Big Bend, is leaving the seat.
* State Reps. Joan Ballweg, R-Markesan, and Melissa Sargent, D-Madison, easily won their primaries for state Senate seats. Ballweg is vying for the seat now held by retiring Sen. Luther Olson, R-Ripon, and Sargent is seeking the seat of outgoing Sen. Mark Miller, D-Monona.
* Republican Alex Dallman will face off against well-funded Democrat Nate Zimdars for the Assembly seat Ballweg has won comfortably in recent years. Meanwhile, Madison Alder Samba Baldeh won a four-way primary for Sargent’s heavily Democratic Assembly seat. He will face Republican Samuel Anderson in the fall.
* Elsewhere in Madison, restaurant owner Francesca Hong won a seven-way Democratic primary for Rep. Chris Taylor’s former seat. She is set to face Republican Patrick Hull for the heavily Democratic seat in the general election.
* In congressional races, Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald cruised to the GOP nomination for the 5th Congressional District, putting him in the driver’s seat to succeed retiring U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls.
* And U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, will meet Derrick Van Orden, a retired Navy SEAL, in western Wisconsin’s 3rd CD. That race is likely the only congressional seat in Wisconsin that will get much attention this fall.

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