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**Final spending reports show legislative Democrats outspent GOP by $6.1 million**

*By WisPolitics.com*

Legislative Democrats, with the help of the Democratic Party’s robust fundraising, outspent their GOP counterparts in Wisconsin by more than $6.1 million ahead of the November election.

A WisPolitics.com review of campaign finance data found Democrats in the Assembly and Senate spent nearly $18.4 million across all races, while Republicans in the same races spent slightly less than $12.2 million. Altogether, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin gave legislative candidates on the November ballot nearly $9.6 million in 2020, according to a check of the state’s database of campaign contributions. That includes monetary donations and in-kind contributions.

The review found Democrats had the financial edge in nearly every single closely watched legislative race. And 10 of the 115 races even recorded more than $1 million in total candidate spending for the 2019-20 cycle, five in the Senate and five in the Assembly.

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign told WisPolitics.com the number of million-dollar races this cycle is likely a state record. By their count, the previous district record happened in both 2016 and 2018 with six races over $1 million. But those numbers also factored in spending by outside groups.

WisPolitics.com’s count today only considers candidate spending from January finance reports and not independent expenditures.

Democrats lost two seats in the Senate and picked up two in the Assembly, blocking a veto-proof supermajority for the GOP. Preserving Gov. Tony Evers’ veto power was one of the main objectives and themes for the Democratic Party’s fundraising.

In its review, WisPolitics.com did not include spending from primary candidates who didn’t make it to the fall campaign.

As of Thursday, not all candidates had submitted their finance reports. Some 11 still had yet to file their 2020 spending with the state.

Here are the 10 most expensive races by total candidate spending:

**Senate District 30**

Democratic candidate Jonathon Hansen, nephew to former district Democratic Sen. Dave Hansen, ultimately lost his Republican-leaning district by 9.4 percentage points. He raised almost $1.5 million and spent over $1.4 million with $18,184 leftover.

His GOP opponent Eric Wimberger ultimately won the seat after spending slightly more than half of what Hansen did — $791,342 for the year. He raised $799,696 and finished with $12,723 in the bank.

Candidates spent a combined more than $2.2 million.

**Senate District 8**

Democrat Neal Plotkin spent more than $1.2 million in his unsuccessful bid to unseat incumbent state Sen. Alberta Darling. He raised $1.2 million and finished the year with a negative $7,236 account balance.

The River Hills Republican meanwhile raised $837,324 and spent $962,645 with a $17,615 war chest left over. Darling held onto the district by 10,213 votes, or 8.5 percentage points.

Combined, the two spent $2.2 million.

**Senate District 32**

Democrat Brad Pfaff, the former DATCP secretary-designee under Evers, won the seat by 582 votes against Republican Dan Kapanke. In all of 2020, Pfaff raised nearly $1.6 million and spent more than $1.5 million. He finished the year with $37,353 still in the bank.

Kapanke, meanwhile, took in $620,520 over the year and spent $601,699 in his failed bid to take the seat. He ended 2020 with $18,820 left.

Candidates spent a combined nearly $2.2 million over the cycle.

Senate District 24

Democrat Paul Piotrowski lost the race against incumbent state Sen. Pat Testin by nearly 13 points. But he outraised and outspent his opponent over the cycle, spending more than $1.1 million and raising close to $1.2 million. He finished with $14,931 left in the bank.

Testin, of Stevens Point, spent $723,620, raised $488,744 and finished with $2,812.

The two together spent a total nearly $1.9 million.

**Senate District 10**

Incumbent Democratic Sen. Patty Schachtner failed to hold on to her GOP-leaning seat. She lost the district by nearly 20 percentage points. Even so, she raised $676,162 and spent $743,089 leading up to Nov. 3. She finished with $7,911.

Her GOP opponent Rob Stafsholt spent $496,786 and raised $549,358, leaving $159,198 in the bank.

Combined, both candidates over the cycle spent a total more than $1.2 million.

**Assembly District 63**

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, successfully held on to his district by 17 percentage points after spending $616,467 and raising $372,631. He finished 2020 with a $101,282 war chest.

His Democratic opponent Joel Jacobsen, meanwhile, raised $707,114 and spent $696,484 with $10,810 still in the bank.

In total, both candidates spent slightly more than $1.3 million combined.

**Assembly District 51**

Incumbent Rep. Todd Novak, R-Dodgeville, survived a challenge from Democrat Kriss Marion by 1,258 votes. He raised $491,043 over the cycle and spent $515,419, leaving $1,662 in the bank.

In her failed bid for the seat, Marion outraised and outspent Novak. She took in $752,323 over the year and spent $727,381. She finished the year with $22,119.

Combined, both candidates leading up to the election spent more than $1.2 million.

**Assembly District 23**

Then-GOP incumbent Jim Ott of Mequon lost his district to Democrat Deb Andraca by 3.3 percentage points. Ott over the year raised $398,479 and spent $398,823. He finished the year with $2,344 left in the bank.

Andraca raised $726,587 over the year and spent $739,691. She finished with $17,993.

Ott and Andraca combined spent a total of more than $1.1 million.

**Assembly District 14**

Incumbent Rep. Robyn Vining, D-Wauwatosa, held on to her seat against GOP candidate Bonnie Lee by 3,184 votes. In her bid to retain the suburban Milwaukee district, she raised $947,477 over the year and spent $934,562, finishing with $64,537 still in the bank.

Lee, meanwhile, raised $318,828 and spent $298,211. She ended the year with $20,617.

Both candidates in total spent more than $1.2 million.

**Assembly District 24**

GOP Rep. Dan Knodl of Germantown won another term by nearly 3 percentage points. He took in $410,426 and spent $418,602, leaving $21,270 still in the bank.

Democratic opponent Emily Siegrist spent $671,717 and raised $665,408. She finished with a $7,107 war chest.

Combined, Knodl and Siegrist spent nearly $1.1 million.

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