**Spring 2025 State Supreme Court race gets early kickoff**

By WisPolitics.com

Let the spring 2025 state Supreme Court race begin!

You may be a bit confused, given that we're still in the midst of the big 2024 election season that will decide the races for president, the U.S. Senate, the House, and more than 100 seats in the state Legislature.

But the spring race next year will again decide the philosophical balance of the high court, which switched to liberals for the first time in more than a decade via the high-spending April 2023 victory by Janet Protasiewicz.

Now enter Dane County Judge Susan Crawford. Crawford in early June formally launched her campaign for the state Supreme Court next year, looking to protect liberals’ 4-3 majority.

Crawford is seeking to succeed fellow progressive Justice Ann Walsh Bradley, who announced earlier this year she had decided against seeking a fourth 10-year term on the court.

“For the first time in years, we have a majority on the court focused on getting the facts right, following the law, and protecting our constitutional rights,” Crawford said. “We can’t risk having that progress reversed.”

So far, Waukesha County Circuit Court Judge Brad Schimel, a former GOP attorney general, is the only candidate to have formally entered the spring race. Fellow conservative Maria Lazar, a judge on the 2nd District Court of Appeals who worked under Schimel at the state Department of Justice, has been considering a run.

Crawford is a former assistant attorney general who also worked at the departments of Corrections and Natural Resources before serving as chief legal counsel to then-Democrat Gov. Jim Doyle. She won a race for an open seat on the Dane County Circuit Court in 2018. She was unopposed this spring for another six-year term.

Her campaign quickly took a shot at Schimel, saying he has “proven to be a right-wing extremist,” who advocated for enforcing an 1849 law that some interpreted as banning abortion, fought to restrict access to contraceptives and “failed rape victims by ignoring a backlog of thousands of untested rape kits – making it harder to hold violent criminals accountable and take them off the streets.”

Schimel fired back the differences between the two of them couldn’t be any more dramatic, saying he’s backed by a bipartisan group of law enforcement officials and groups, while Crawford was “was handpicked by the leftist majority on the Supreme Court to cement their stranglehold for another three years.”

“While I was a frontline prosecutor in the courtroom defending crime victims and putting criminals behind bars, she was working for radical left-wing special interests groups that don’t share our values,” Schimel said.

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