Dems have early advertising advantage in key Assembly races

By WisPolitics.com

Dems and their allies as of mid-September had more than three times the ad reservations than their GOP counterparts in nine of 12 key Assembly races through Election Day, according to WisPolitics review of AdImpact data.

Altogether, Dems and those backing them had reserved $5.8 million between Labor Day and Election Day in the races, compared to $1.4 million reserved on the GOP side.

WisPolitics has identified 12 races as key to determining control of the Assembly. While Republicans had a 64-35 majority at the start of the legislative session, that majority is now up for grabs with new legislative maps that give Dems more opportunities to flip the
chamber.

A review of the ad reservations shows many of the campaigns have invested in joint buys with their parties’ respective campaign fundraising committees, the Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee and Republican Assembly Campaign Committee.

Meanwhile, groups such as A Better Wisconsin Together and the Assembly Accountability Project are backing Dem candidates while conservative groups including Jobs First Coalition and Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce’s Issues Mobilization Council are investing in GOP campaigns.

Insiders say the ad disparity is a result of the superior resources the state Dem Party has been pulling in over recent years compared to its GOP counterpart. It has enabled the Dem Party to put money into legislative candidates and the legislative caucuses that has been
tough for Republicans to match.

The ad buys, though, are one piece of the spending puzzle in key races, which will also see groups weigh in through canvassing, mail and other methods. Those efforts are typically reported to the Ethics Commission through its website. But it hasn’t been fully operational
for much of early September. Some reports began rolling in as the website came back online.

Those include the Jobs First Coalition Political Fund putting $105,129 into online and radio ads opposing state Rep. Jodi Emerson, D-Eau Claire. She’s seeking reelection in a district that’s now 53% Dem after her seat had been 63% in her favor under the old maps, and GOP
Assembly leaders have mentioned it as a target. According to AdImpact, Republican Michele Skinner and RACC have a joint buy for $64,257, while Emerson and her caucus have $61,000 reserved.

Here is a mid-September sweep of buys in the top 12 districts as tracked by AdImpact for snapshots of the early efforts in those races.

--21st AD: Rep. Jessie Rodriguez, R-Oak Creek vs. Milwaukee Dem David Marstellar Spending advantage: $711,055 Dem vs. $110,304 GOP

--26th AD: Rep. Amy Binsfeld, R-Sheboygan vs. Sheboygan Dem Joe Sheehan
Spending advantage: $519,050 Dem vs. $108,044 GOP

--30th AD: Rep. Shannon Zimmerman, R-River Falls vs. River Falls Dem Alison Page
Spending advantage: $366,422 Dem vs. $80,336 GOP

--51st AD: Rep. Todd Novak, R-Dodgeville, vs. Mount Horeb Dem Elizabeth Grabe
Spending advantage: $106,860 GOP vs. $8,545 Dem

--53rd AD: Neenah Republican Dean Kaufert vs. Neenah Dem Duane Shukoski
Spending advantage: $402,652 Dem vs. $79,777 GOP

--61st AD: Rep. Bob Donovan, R-Greenfield vs. Hales Corners Dem LuAnn Bird
Spending advantage: $653,991 Dem vs. $0 GOP

--85th AD: Rep. Patrick Snyder, R-Schofield vs. Weston Dem Yee Leng Xiong
Spending advantage: $630,410 Dem vs. $90,916 GOP

--88th AD: De Pere Republican Benjamin Franklin vs. De Pere Dem Christy Welch
Spending advantage: $807,706 Dem vs. $97,804 GOP

--89th AD: Green Bay Republican Patrick Buckley vs. Green Bay Dem Ryan Spaude
Spending advantage: $602,497 Dem vs $429,376 GOP

--92nd AD: Rep. Clint Moses, R-Menomonie vs. Menomonie Dem Joe Plouff
Spending advantage: $76,986 GOP vs. $38,035 Dem

--94th AD: Rep. Steve Doyle, D-Onalaska vs. Onalaska Republican Ryan Huebsch
Spending advantage: $1,032,931 Dem vs. $330,570 GOP

--96th AD: Rep. Loren Oldenburg, R-Viroqua vs. La Crosse Dem Tara Johnson
Spending advantage: $54,181 GOP vs. $0 Dem

For more, go to [www.wispolitics.com](http://www.wispolitics.com)