

NOVEMBER 2ND WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Every election we are told that this one is the most important one of them all! That is usually true but it will probably be a long time before we in Wisconsin see one quite as important at this one.

The voters in Wisconsin will decide what political party wins the Governor's seat, which party will control both the State Senate and State Assembly. That alone would be significant but Wisconsin voters might very well decide which party controls both houses of Congress.

At the federal level the Republicans are hoping to defeat 16 year Democratic US Senator Russ Feingold and unless the Feingold supporters turn out that very well could happen. In the US House, the GOP is hoping to pick up 2 seats just here in Wisconsin. US Rep. Dave Obey's open seat offers an opportunity for the GOP to pick one. Democratic State Senator Julie Lassa (Plover) is trying to win the Obey seat against Ashland County DA Sean Duffy. That race is too close to call.

The other House seat is the north eastern district represented by US Rep. Steve Kagen (Appleton). Kagen, like Feingold and Lassa, has been a strong supporter of fire fighter issues but this year with an angry voter it is difficult to know what will happen.

Here in Wisconsin everyone is aware of the race for Governor with Mayor Tom Barrett running an aggressive campaign against GOP candidate Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker. That race is too close to call.

Both houses of the State Legislature have been controlled by Democrats for only the past two years. In the Senate the Democrats have a 2 seat margin with a split of 18-15. Four Democratic senators won election 4 years ago by a few votes each. That was in a good Democratic year.

The State Assembly became Democratic just two years ago after picking up just enough seats to gain the majority. Most gains in Assembly in past 2 elections were made in marginal Democratic or even Republican districts. Again the past 2 elections found the voters angry with the incumbent GOP. This election looks to be maybe just the opposite. Assembly Democrats today have 51 seats, the GOP 46 and there are 2 independents.

So you can see that without support from their friends it would not take much for the political power to switch from Democratic to Republican. So what is at stake if the power shifts?

Attached is a list of at least 19 items that could be under consideration for change if friends of the RPPFW do not retain power. These changes are being pushed by some citizen groups that think public employees and annuitants have it too good. That includes the tea party types both here in Wisconsin and their fat cat financial supporters out of state. Some Republican office holders and others seeking office for the first time have their sights on public employees and annuitants at both the state and local level.

What makes the agenda for making these changes so realistic is the support from the municipal employer associations. They have lobbied for some of these items for years but they are able to make a stronger case now than they have in the past. Their argument is that since Shared Revenue has been frozen and even cut in recent years and since the state imposes levy limits, they need to be able to reduce their spending on employees. They claim they are not able to do that without radical changes to the collective bargaining other laws designed to protect the employee.

They simply say that “Ok so we do not expect more aid from the state and you will not let us raise new revenue so then give us the power to reduce our cost”. Take another close look at that list of legislative changes that would be under consideration with a Republican administration and a Republican Legislature. I am sure you can see what is at stake!

Make sure you and family vote on November 2nd.