

ELECTION UPDATE

The effort by the Wisconsin GOP to destroy public employee unions almost had as its first victim one of their own. WI Supreme Court Justice David Prosser nearly lost his re-election bid. What is so remarkable about the Prosser election is the fact that just 45 days ago he was on a path to easily win reelection against a little know opponent.

Prosser's loss would have been important for two reasons:

1. The balance on the Supreme Court would have shifted from a 4-3 conservative majority to a liberal 4-3 majority.
2. The election became a referendum on the job performance of newly elected Governor Scott Walker. More specifically it was a referendum on Walker's efforts to destroy public employee unions and their right to collective bargain. When it looked like Prosser was going to lose the Governor said the election was not a referendum on him so I guess we can take his word.

Kloppenborg ran a good race but much credit goes to independent groups. If it was not for the financial support and grass roots efforts she would not have done so well. Employee unions' labor would never have become so motivated.

Even though Justice Prosser was not a victim of GOP efforts to destroy public employee unions, there are at least 4 others that were:

1. In **Milwaukee County** an election was held to fill the vacant seat of County Executive. That of course was Scott Walker's seat. A Walker ally, State Rep. Jeff Stone (R) hoped to fill that seat. The Democratic candidate in the non-partisan election was Chris Abele, a little know philanthropist (with lots of money but lots of bad press) still trounced Stone 61% to 39%.
2. Another open seat for county executive was in **Dane County**. Rep. Joe Parisi (D) easily defeated a conservative county supervisor with 70% of the vote. Parisi was expected to win but once the attacks on public employees began it turned into a landslide.
3. In Republican **Outagamie County** former Democratic Rep. Tom Nelson (and Tom Barrett's running mate) defeated former GOP State Treasurer Jack Voight (52% to 48%). No one though Nelson had a chance in Dave Prosser's old backyard.
4. Even a Democrat and friend of progressive causes lost partially due to the GOP attack on public employees. **Madison** Mayor Dave Cieslewicz lost a close race to former Madison Mayor Paul Soglin. Both were critical of attacks on public employees but it appears the voters thought that Soglin with a more combative style was what is necessary to counter the attacks on public employees.

What's next?