

Legislative Update June 2016

I. Upcoming State and Federal Elections

The state Government Accountability Board (GAB) likely met for the final time on Tuesday, June 14, 2016 when it convened by teleconference to hear a challenge by 11th AD candidate Brandon Jackson of the GAB's decision to deny him ballot access. The GAB sustained its denial and former Rep. Jason Fields and his Democratic challenger, Darrol Gibson remain the only candidates on the ballot for November 8. The GAB will be dissolved on June 30, 2016 to be replaced by separate Elections and Ethics Commissions.

The appointees to the new Commissions will be partisan appointees who serve five-year terms; the current board is led by nonpartisan former judges. Republican and Democratic leaders in the Assembly and Senate to appoint one member each to the elections and ethics commissions. The governor has two appointees to both commissions. He or she nominates two former judges to the ethics commission and two former county or municipal clerks to the elections commission.

All gubernatorial appointees are subject to a confirmation vote by the state Senate. Third parties also can be represented by a commissioner if their candidate for governor got 10 percent or more of the vote in the most recent gubernatorial election. Those commissioners would be nominated by the governor and subject to Senate confirmation.

Following is an overview of candidates for state and federal office, as approved by the GAB, as well as overviews of selected races.

Federal elections:

- U.S. Senate: Both Ron Johnson and Russ Feingold face primary challengers; however, neither faces a serious challenge.
- 1st CD: Speaker Ryan's Republican primary challenger Paul Nehlen remains on ballot after the GAB rejected challenges to his nomination papers made by Orville Seymer, a Milwaukee-area conservative activist.
- 2nd CD: Rep. Mark Pocan faces a long-shot Tea Party Republican opponent in Peter Theron, a math instructor at Madison College.
- 3rd CD: Rep. Ron Kind has no Republican opponent, the first time in 90 years there has been an uncontested race in this district. Kind faces a primary challenger who was allegedly inspired by Bernie Sanders to run.
- 4th CD: Former State Senator Gary George, (for the second time in as many races), along with a third Democrat, an Independent, a Libertarian, and a Republican, make long-shot bids to unseat Rep. Gwen Moore. George was trounced in his 2014 primary bid against Rep. Moore, earning just 29% of the vote.
- 5th CD: Sensenbrenner is opposed by two long-shot candidates, one a Democrat, the other a Libertarian.

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- 6th CD: Freshman Rep. Glenn Grothman escaped a primary challenge, but drew two Democrats and an Independent, all long-shot candidates.
- 7th CD: Rep. Sean Duffy will have a primary challenge after an unsuccessful challenge by the 7th CD GOP chair to Republican Donald Raihala's nomination papers. There will also be a Democratic primary after two Democrats, a Populist, and a Libertarian were kicked off the ballot by the GAB.
- 8th CD: Republican candidates running to replace retiring Rep. Reid Ribble include sitting State Senator Alan Lasee, who's residency in the district has been an issue in this and prior campaigns, and a well-financed former Walker Presidential campaign aide, Mike Gallagher. Gallagher is from outside the district, but has a heavy money advantage. Democratic candidate Tom Nelson, the Outagamie County Executive, was heavily recruited by the DCCC to run in the district. He does not face a primary challenge.

State Elections:

- State Rep. Dave Craig, R-Big Bend, is in line to win a Senate seat without drawing any opponents. He was the only one to file nomination papers for the seat being vacated by Sen. Mary Lazich, R-New Berlin.
- Incumbent senators who did not draw any opponents include: Sen. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills; Sen. Mark Miller, D-Monona; Sen. Duey Stroebel, R-Saukville; Sen. Bob Wirch, D-Kenosha; and Sen. Fred Risser, D-Madison.
- Incumbent representatives who did not draw an opponent: Rep. David Bowen, D-Milwaukee; Rep. Fred Kessler, D-Milwaukee; Rep. Rob Hutton, R-Brookfield; Rep. Joe Sanfelippo, R-New Berlin; Rep. Evan Goyke, D-Milwaukee; Rep. Jonathan Brostoff, D-Milwaukee; Rep. Janel Brandtjen, R-Menomonee Falls; Rep. Jim Ott, R-Mequon; Rep. Dan Knodl, R-Germantown; Rep. Jeffrey Mursau, R-Crivitz; Rep. Deb Kolste, D-Janesville; Rep. Mark Spreitzer, D-Beloit; Rep. Gary Hebl, D-Sun Prairie; Rep. Melissa Sargent, D-Madison; Rep. Michael Schraa, R-Oshkosh; Rep. Bob Gannon, R-Slinger; Rep. Jesse Kremer, R-Kewaskum; Rep. Tom Weatherston, R-Racine; Rep. Peter Barca, D-Kenosha; Rep. Tod Ohnstad, D-Kenosha; Rep. Bob Kulp, R-Stratford; Rep. Katrina Shankland, D-Stevens Point; Rep. Nick Milroy, D-South Range; Rep. Beth Meyers, D-Bayfield; Rep. Terese Berceau, D-Madison; Rep. Ken Skowronski, R-Franklin; Rep. Mike Kuglitsch, R-New Berlin; Rep. Eric Genrich, D-Green Bay; Rep. Warren Petryk, R-Eleva; Rep. Jill Billings, D-La Crosse; Rep. Scott Allen, R-Waukesha; and Rep. Cindi Duchow, R-Pewaukee.
- Incumbent state lawmakers facing primary challenges include: Sen. Lena Taylor, D-Milwaukee; Sen. Jennifer Shilling, D-La Crosse; Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa, D-Milwaukee; Rep. Josh Zepnick, D-Milwaukee; Rep. Leon Young, D-Milwaukee; Rep. Christine Sinicki, D-Milwaukee; Rep. Lisa Subeck, D-Madison; and Rep. SONDY POPE, D-Mount Horeb.

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4th SD: Sen. Lena Taylor faces a primary challenge from Rep. Mandela Barnes. The challenge has prompted deep divisions within the Democratic Party, where Rep. Barnes was cut off from access to the voter file.

- 7th AD: The GAB rejected a challenge filed by Rep. Daniel Riemer against his Republican opponent.
- 11th AD: Former Rep. Jason Fields, who lost his spot in the Legislature in a 2012 Dem primary, has filed to run for his old seat. The only other candidates to file for the seat as of late this afternoon were Darroll Gibson, a political organizer for Wisconsin Jobs Now and endorsed by Rep. David Bowen, and Brandon Jackson, both of whom originally filed ahead of the June 1 deadline. On Tuesday the GAB unanimously voted to deny ballot access to Jackson for failure to include certain required information on his nomination papers.
- 16th AD: Rep. Leon Young faces a four-way primary as he narrowly beat off a challenge to the signatures he collected on his nomination papers. The challenge was filed by Edgar Lin, one of Rep. Young's three Democratic challengers. Lin is an attorney in the State Public Defender's office. Brandy Bond
- 20th AD: A challenge to Rep. Christine Sinicki's nomination papers was withdrawn. Rep. Sinicki still faces a primary challenge from Democrat Julie Meyer, an MPS teacher, allegedly in response to the County Executive's no-bid mental health facility in the district.

II. Speakers' Task Forces

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos created three task forces in August of 2015, including: the Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia; the Speaker's Task Force on Urban Education; and, the Speaker's Task Force on Youth Workforce Readiness.

On January 20, 2016, the Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia approved ten, bipartisan bills to designed improve the care of those suffering from these diseases by providing community-based resources and education, including; investing \$1 million in respite care; expanding the number of dementia care specialists; educating caregivers and employers about Alzheimer's and dementia; and, increasing dementia training for mobile crisis teams.

On June 15, 2016, the Speaker's Task Force on Urban Education released its Final Report, which Democrats on the Committee blasted as being nothing more than bullet points that do nothing to address the crisis in urban education around the state. Among the items the Task Force urged the Legislature to consider are to: reevaluate the Peer Review Mentor Grant Program; streamline the license renewal process for experienced teachers who serve as mentors to new teachers; encourage teacher preparatory programs to provide instruction in how to teach in urban settings and in how to teach reading to all teacher license applicants; clarify the definitions of "truancy" and "habitual truancy" and specify what constitutes sufficient evidence

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to initiate a court proceeding without providing a student with educational counseling or other evaluative services; explore creating a Medicaid Billing Code for consultation time between mental health care providers, parents, and school personnel; investigate barriers to communication about a student's mental health between physicians and mental health care professionals; review the collegiate transfer programs between the technical colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) and the UW System; review state funding to school districts for summer school; review state funding for four-year-old kindergarten and explore additional options for investing in early childhood education.

The Speaker's Task Force on Youth Workforce Readiness has yet to issue its report.

III. Legislative Council Study Committees

During the last half of every even-numbered year, the Joint Legislative Council convenes Joint Study Committees which are charged with studying legislatively directed issues. This year's committees include:

- Legislative Council Study Committee on Access to Civil Legal Services
- Legislative Council Study Committee on the Preservation of Burial Sites
- Legislative Council Study Committee on Publication of Government Documents and Legal Notices
- Legislative Council Study Committee on Reducing Recidivism and Removing Impediments to Ex-Offender Employment
- Legislative Council Study Committee on Rural Broadband
- Legislative Council Study Committee on School Data
- Legislative Council Study Committee on Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician Shortages
- Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations

Although the chair and vice-chair have been established for each study committee, membership on the Committees will be finalized today by mail ballot. Membership includes members of the Senate, the Assembly, and the general public. No meetings will have yet been scheduled for any of the Committees.