

Date: September 4, 2024

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Caroline Gomez-Tom, Chairwoman, Committee on Intergovernmental Relations

From: Fred Ludwig, Government Affairs Liaison

Subject: File No. 24-9 Report

Pursuant to File No. 24-9, this report is submitted as an informational report regarding legislative updates. The purpose of this report is to provide an update related to local, state, and federal policy developments, as well as an overview on the current state legislative session.

4th Senate District Special Primary Election

A special primary election was held for the 4th State Senate District seat on July 2, which was vacant following the appointment of former State Senator Lena C. Taylor to the Milwaukee County Circuit Court. State Representative Dora Drake won with roughly 66 percent of the vote, while State Representative LaKeshia Myers took roughly 34 percent of the vote.

A special general election was held on July 30 in which Rep. Drake ran unopposed, effectively granting her the seat through the remainder of former Sen. Taylor's term which concludes at the end of 2024.

In the August 13 primary race for a full four-year term of the seat, Drake once again bested Myers. As noted below, with no Republican on the general election ballot, she effectively will serve the full four-year term beginning in January 2025.

Partisan Primary Results

Elections for 2024 partisan races began with primary election ballots cast on August 13 and with the general election taking place on November 5.

Some area results with contested primary include the following seats:

- 4th Senate District
 - Incumbent Democrat Dora Drake one primary challenger, effectively granting her a full four year term for the seat with no Republican in the general election.
- 8th Assembly District
 - Incumbent Democrat Sylvia Ortiz-Velez defeated one primary challenger, effectively granting her another term with no Republican challenger in the general election.
- 9th Assembly District
 - Democrat Priscilla A. Prado defeated one primary challenger. She will face Republican Ryan Michael Antczak in the general election.
- 11th Assembly District

- Democrat Sequanna Taylor defeated one primary opponent, effectively granting her a term with no Republican challenger in the general election.
- 12th Assembly District
 - Democrat Russell Antonio Goodwin, Sr. defeated three primary opponents. He will face Independent Deanna Alexander in the general election.
- 14th Assembly District
 - Democrat Angelito Tenorio defeated two primary opponents. He will face Republican Jim Engstrand in the general election.
- 18th Assembly District
 - Democrat Margaret Arney defeated one primary opponent. She will face Republican Kevin Anderson in the general election
- 19th Assembly District
 - Incumbent Democrat Ryan Clancy defeated one primary challenger, effectively granting him another term with no Republican challenger in the general election.

Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes

On July 5, the Wisconsin Supreme Court restored the use of absentee ballot drop boxes in a 4-3 decision. The ruling means election clerks across Wisconsin can, but are not required to, use the ballot drop boxes during the August 13 partisan primaries and the November 5 general elections.

This decision reverses a July 2022 Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling that drop boxes were illegal because state law did not explicitly authorize boxes anywhere other than election clerk offices and that no one other than the voter could return a ballot in person.

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

In another decision on July 5, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that the Joint Finance Committee cannot unilaterally block projects and land acquisitions funded with money from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, as they violate the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches.

WCA Annual Conference

As has been noted in communication to Supervisors over the past several months, the WCA Annual Conference in La Crosse this coming September 22-24.

An update to programming for the conference is that Chairwoman Nicholson will be leading a breakout session titled “Building Tomorrow’s Leaders: A Guide to Creating a County Youth Commission” on Monday, September 23, from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Chairwoman Nicholson was the lead legislative author of the 2022 resolution that re-established the Milwaukee County Youth Commission, which exists to serve the interests of Milwaukee County youth, make advisory recommendations about policy and budgetary decisions to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, and advance Milwaukee County's mission of achieving racial equity.

Along with leadership from the Youth Commission, Chairwoman Nicholson will discuss how the commission provides a unique experience in community service, civic engagement, and policy and budget decision-making, as well as how other counties can encourage participation from youth in local governance.

Our Youth Commissioners represent the voice of young people here in our county and their interaction with our county board has been important, impactful, and valued. They bring to our board and to our county a perspective that is unique in policy discussions and essential to position Milwaukee County for a sustainable and brighter tomorrow. We hope that this presentation will highlight the Board's investment in the Youth Commission, as well as how our counterparts in counties across the state can mirror the work and success of our Commissioners.