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**Longtime state senators gearing up for re-election in 2020**

Joint Finance Committee Co-chair Alberta Darling tells WisPolitics.com she is gearing up to seek re-election in 2020 with two significant fundraisers on tap this summer.

Darling raised $36,550 during the first six months of 2019, the fifth-best haul in the state Senate for the period. Still, that’s behind the pace she set for the same period in 2015, when she raised $64,220 ahead of winning re-election in 2016 without opposition.

Darling, 75, said she is running again to continue pushing the reforms that she said have helped spark Wisconsin’s economy.

This session was her sixth co-chairing the JFC, tying her with Republican Sen. Walter Hollander, who led the committees in the 1960s and 1970s, for most terms heading the committee.

“A lot of our reforms are working. I’d like to see that play out,” Darling, R-River Hills, said in an interview. “With the new Gov. Evers, I think it’s really important for those who were part of those reforms to stay connected, to make sure they keep going.”

A WisPolitics.com check of campaign finance reports in mid-July shows freshman GOP Sen. Pat Testin, a likely target in 2020, turned in the best fundraising haul among senators. The Stevens Point Republican pulled in $93,019 over the period. He finished June with $200,005 in the bank.

Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, was next at $92,080 raised, while freshman GOP Sen. Dan Feyen of Fond du Lac, another possible 2020 target, pulled in $45,206.

Democratic Sen. Patty Schachtner, who won a normally GOP western Wisconsin seat in a 2018 special election, was No. 8 in the chamber for fundraising with $30,474 over the six-month period. The Somerset Democrat had $28,474 in the bank to end June.

The check also found several longtime state senators up in 2020 who reported little fundraising activity or were behind their pace from the same period four years ago.

Sen. Luther Olsen, R-Ripon and a member of Finance, raised $12,223 over the first six months of 2019, compared to $43,992 during the same period four years earlier. Still, he told WisPolitics.com this week he intends to seek re-election in 2020. Olsen, 68, was first elected to the Senate in 2004 after eight years in the Assembly.

Sen. Rob Cowles, R-Green Bay, says he also plans to seek re-election after reporting just $115 raised over the first six months of the year. Cowles, who turns 69 later this month, has served in the Senate since winning a 1987 special election. He raised $10,550 over the first half of 2015.

“I’m a retail politician,” Cowles said, adding he typically doesn’t feel a need to raise a lot of money for his campaigns.

On the Democratic side, state Sen. Bob Wirch, who was elected to his Kenosha-area Senate seat in 1996, raised $96 over the first six months of the year. The Somers Democrat also wasn’t very active over the first six months of 2015, pulling in $820. Still, the $50,059 he had in the bank at the end of June was in the same ballpark as the $49,588 he had stashed away in the middle of 2015.

Wirch, 75, said he has “every intention of running right now.”

Sen. Dave Hansen, D-Green Bay, has been a regular GOP target but raised just $30 over the first half of 2019, compared to $10,315 for the same period four years earlier. Still, the $41,756 he had in the bank is similar to the $40,469 he had in mid-2015, and an aide told WisPolitics.com last week the longtime lawmaker planned to talk with his family before making a final decision on a run in 2020. He had looked at doing a fundraiser this spring but decided against doing one with the state Supreme Court race and other campaigns.

Sen. Mark Miller, D-Monona, raised $60 in the first six months of the year and had $4,621 in the bank. That’s in line with four years ago, when he raised $62, though he had $17,990 in the bank then. Miller, 76, was unopposed in seeking re-election three years ago. He didn’t respond to calls this week.

And state Sen. Fred Risser, the longest-serving state lawmaker in the nation’s history, reported raising zero dollars in the first half of 2019 with $3,161 in the bank. That’s not unusual for Risser, who reported $15 in donations over the first half of 2015 and was unopposed for re-election last time.

The Madison Democrat, 92, said it was premature to decide so early in the session about next fall’s elections. Risser, who first won a seat in the Assembly in 1956, joined the Senate after winning a 1962 special election.

“I’m working hard on the current session,” he said, pointing out he wouldn’t have to notify the state until this spring if he decides against running.

**Vos leads Assembly fundraising**

Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, led fundraising in the state Assembly over the first six months of 2019, pulling in $29,280.

That helped push his cash on hand to $308,702, second in the Legislature only to Fitzgerald’s $458,325.

Freshman GOP Rep. Tony Kurtz, R-Wonewoc, was No. 2 in the Assembly for most raised at $27,954.

He only pulled in $600 of that from committees, though he benefited from $8,897 in conduit contributions.

JFC Co-chair John Nygren, R-Marinette, was next at $26,127 raised in the period, while Speaker Pro Tempore Tyler August, R-Lake Geneva, followed at $23,285 and Rep. Rob Swearingen, R-Rhinelander, rounded out the top five at $11,815.

Freshman Democratic Rep. Robyn Vining, of Wauwatosa, was her party’s top fundraiser at $8,892, coming in No. 12 overall in the chamber. Expected to be a top GOP target this fall, she had $15,908 in the bank to end June.

*The Capitol Report is written by editorial staff at WisPolitics.com, a nonpartisan, Madison-based news service that specializes in coverage of government and politics, and is distributed for publication by members of the Wisconsin Newspaper Association.*

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