

Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of Washington

2020 Primary Election Wrap up

By Bill Stauffacher, IIABW's Lobbyist

Most of Washington's ballots have been counted from the August 4 primary. Over 56,000 ballots remain to be counted with about 2.43 million counted to date. The turnout will be over 52.7%, an above average showing for a primary election. Final primary results should be released in a few days.

This year's ballot includes all state-wide offices, half of the state Senate seats and all state House seats. Both U.S. Senate seats are not on this year's ballot. In the state legislature, Democrats have working majorities in both chambers and will remain in control after the general election.

Key takeaways:

- **No blue wave in the primary.** While Washington is considered a solid blue state there was no overwhelming blue wave in this election. However, most insiders expect the anti-Trump blue wave to arrive in the general election.
- **House Republicans had a solid primary.** House Republicans moved into position to win two Democratic-held seats, though several GOP-held seats will be competitive in the general and at risk if a strong blue wave comes ashore.
- **Key Senate races are all toss-ups.** In the Senate there is no clear primary winner. There are four swing races, three GOP-held seats and one Democrat-held seat, with all four considered toss-ups this November.
- **Three down-ballot state-wide races will draw unexpected interest.** Statewide offices have unpredictable dynamics in races for Lt. Governor, Public Lands Commissioner and Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- **Several Blue v Blue races in November.** With Washington's open primary system, there are several Democrat v. Democrat races on the general election ballot – including one Congressional seat, the Lt. Governor race, a Senate seat and a House seat. This is the first election in which there are several major races having same party battles coming in the general election.
- **Progressives are flexing their growing clout.** We are seeing the beginning of progressive Democrats going after Democratic incumbents. Expect this dynamic to become more prevalent in 2022. But the establishment did survive in one race. In a hotly-contested primary fight, a progressive left candidate took on a "practical" liberal legislator who scooted by with a narrow victory.

WA Senate:

- Democrats have a 28-21 majority
- There are four swing district races. Republicans have three seats in play and they are winning in all three races. Two of these races are exceptional tight with the GOP winning in both - one seat by a 50.44%/49.34% margin and the other race by a 50.24%/49.65% margin. The third race, an open seat fight, is also a toss-up with the toughest Democrat advancing to the general election.
- Democrats have one swing district in play, a seat held by one of the Democrats' four moderate senators. This incumbent did poorly in the primary with the strongest GOP challenger advancing to the general election.
- In a high-profile Democrat v. Democrat race, Sen. Mark Mullet, chair of the Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee, is slightly behind his progressive left challenger. The battle continues on to the general election.

WA House:

- Democrats have a 57-41 majority
- There are 14 swing districts among the 98 races up this election cycle.
- Republicans have eight seats in play and they are winning in all eight. The GOP is leading in two Democratic districts with one that's a 51.88%/49.46% margin and the other being a solid Republican lead over the Democrats who is considered their party's most conservative legislator. In spite of their primary success, the House GOP has a few seats that are especially exposed if a blue wave does arrive in the general election.

- Democrats have six seats in play – but as mentioned Republicans are leading in two of those races.
- Rep. Steve Kirby, the chair of the House Consumer Protection and Business Committee which oversees P&C insurance issues, survived a tough primary challenge from a progressive left challenger.

Here are the results of statewide and key legislative races. **Incumbents are in bold.**

STATEWIDE & CONGRESSIONAL (As of August 12):

Governor

Gov. Jay Inslee (D) – 50.54%

Loren Culp (R) – 17.0%

Lt. Governor

Denny Heck (D) – 25.18%

Sen. Marko Liias (D) – 18.66%

Attorney General

Bob Ferguson (D) – 56.13%

Matt Larkin (R) – 23.53%

Secretary of State

Kim Wyman (R) – 50.67%

Gael Tarleton (D) – 43.56%

State Treasurer

Duane Davidson (R) – 46.37%

Rep. Mike Pellicciotti (D) – 53.52%

State Auditor

Pat McCarthy (D) – 47.72%

Chris Leyba (R) – 40.74%

Public Lands

Hilary Franz (D) – 51.45%

Sue Kuehl Pederson (R) – 23.3%

Insurance Commissioner

Mike Kreidler (D) – 59.39%

Chirayu Avinash Patel – 26.86%

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Chris Reykdal – 40.45%

Maia Espinoza – 25.2%

8th Congressional District (Issaquah, Wenatchee)

Kim Schrier (D) – 43.33%

Jesse Jensen (R) – 20.02%

Keith Swank (R) – 17.39%

10th Congressional District (Olympia, University Place, Puyallup)

Christine Reeves (D) – 12.94%

Beth Doglio (D) – 14.94%

Marilyn Strickland (D) – 20.54%

KEY STATE LEGISLATIVE RACES IN DISTRICT ORDER (as of August 12):

Senate – 2nd Dist. (Rural Pierce, Thurston counties)

Rick Payne (D) – 29.43%

Jim McCune (R) – 21.37%

Senate – 5th Dist. (Issaquah)

Sen. Mark Mullet (D) – 47.51%

Ingrid Anderson (D) – 48.41%

Senate – 10th Dist. (Whidbey Island, N. Skagit county)

Sen. Ron Muzzall (R) – 50.54%

Helen Price Johnson (D) – 49.34%

House – 10th Dist. (Whidbey Island, N. Skagit county)

Ivan Lewis (D) – 2.95%

Angie Homola (D) – 26.68%

Greg Gilday (R) – 46.15%

Scott McMullen (D) – 6.46%

Suzanne Woodward (D) – 17.47%

House – 10th Dist. Pos. 2 (Whidbey Island, N. Skagit County)

Bill Bruch (R) – 48.55%

Dave Paul (D) – 47.28%

Taylor Zimmerman (D) – 4.05%

Senate – 16th Dist. (Walla Walla, Pasco)

Perry Dozier (R) – 33.18%

Danielle Garbe Reser (D) – 34.28%

William (Bill) Jenkin (R) – 32.42%

Senate – 17th Dist. (Suburban Vancouver)

Sen. Lynda Wilson (R) – 55.42%

Daniel Smith (D) – 44.4%

House – 17th Dist. Pos. 1 (Suburban Vancouver)

Rep. Vicki Kraft (R) – 53.22%

Tanisha L. Harris (D) – 46.66%

Senate – 19th Dist. (Longview, Aberdeen, SW. Coastal WA)

Sen. Dean Takko (D) – 44.5%

Jeff Wilson (R) – 37.99%

Wes Cormier (R) – 17.39%

House – 19th Dist. Pos. 1 (Longview, Aberdeen, SW. Coastal WA)

Rep. Jim Walsh (R) – 57.65%

Marianna Everson (D) – 22.3%

Clint Bryson (D) – 19.96 %

House – 19th Dist. Pos. 2 (Longview, Aberdeen, SW. Coastal WA)

Rep. Brian E. Blake (D) – 46.54%

Joel McEntire (R) – 53.3%

Senate – 25th Dist. (Puyallup)

Chris Gildon (R) – 43.33%

Emmett Smith (R) – 11.73%

Julie Door (D) – 44.76%

House – 25th Dist. Pos. 1 (Puyallup)

Rep. Kelly Chambers (R) – 55.7%

Jamie Smith (D) – 44.13%

House – 25th Dist. Pos. 2 (Puyallup)

Cyndy Jacobsen (R) – 54.41%

Brian Duthie (D) – 45.38%

House – 26th Dist. Pos. 1 (Gig Harbor)

Rep. Jesse L. Young (R) – 52.44%

Drew Darsow (D) – 6.6%

Carrie Hesch (D) – 40.82%

Senate – 28th Dist. (University Place, Lakewood)

Sen. Steve O' Ban (R) – 50.24%

Twina Nobles (D) – 49.65%

House – 28th Dist. Pos. 1 (University Place, Lakewood)

Rep. Mari Leavitt (D) – 57.18%

Kevin Ballard (R) – 42.69%

House – 28th Dist. Pos. 2 (University Place, Lakewood)

Dan Bronoske (D) – 52.44%

Jamie Michaud (R) – 22.44%

Chris Nye (R) – 24.97%

House – 29th Dist. Pos. 2 (S. Tacoma)

Rep. Steve Kirby (D) – 30.67%

Terry Harder (R) – 38.94%

Sharlett Mena (D) – 30.17%

House – 42nd Dist. Pos. 1 (Bellingham, Whatcom county)

Rep. Luanne Van Werven (R) – 51.88%

Alicia Rule (D) – 48.03%

House – 42nd Dist. Pos. 2 (Bellingham, Whatcom county)

Rep. Sharon Shewmake (D) – 49.46%

Jennifer Sefzik (R) – 51.88%

House – 44th Dist. Pos. 2 (Snohomish county)

Mark A. James (R) – 47.41%

Anne Anderson (D) – 19.97%

April Berg (D) – 32.56%