

Washington's top-two primary delivers strange results

AFL-CIO in Washington wants to take back the Legislature in the November election.

Washington's "top two" primary once again delivered strange results as ballots were counted following the Aug. 2 vote: In the race for state treasurer, voters will find no Democrat on the ballot in November, even though Democratic candidates got a 51.4 percent majority of the votes in the primary.

In most states, primary elections determine who the Democratic and Republican parties will place on the November general election ballot, but under a ballot measure passed by Washington voters in 2004, all candidates from all parties compete against each other in the primary, and then the top two vote-getters for each elective office square off in the November general election — even if both are Democrats or Republicans. [Oregon voters rejected similar proposals in 2008 and 2014.] In this year's treasurer's race, Democrats split votes among three candidates, and Republicans among two; that's why voters will have only Republicans to choose from in November — Benton County treasurer Duane Davidson and real estate investment exec Michael Waite. It's the first time that has happened in a statewide race in Washington, where voters lean strongly

Democratic in presidential elections. The state treasurer's office has been held by Democrats for 60 years.

Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) — the state AFL-CIO — had endorsed state Sen. Marko Liias, who got the most votes of the three Democrats running for the post.

But the treasurer's race wasn't a top priority for labor. The real battle this year is to see whether Democrats can pick up two seats to control the state Senate — while holding on to or expanding their 50-to-48 majority in the state House. For several years, the 26-to-23 Republican majority in the Senate has blocked pro-labor laws and budget plans supported by the House and Gov. Jay Inslee.

Democrats' best hope of Senate gains are in Legislative District (LD) 41, Mercer Island, and LD 17, Vancouver. In LD 41, labor-endorsed Democrat Lisa Wellman outpolled incumbent Republican state Sen. Steve Lit-zow by about 300 votes; they'll face each other again in November.

BATTLE FOR THE LEGISLATURE

East Vancouver - LD 17, State Senate

In LD 17, former Democratic state rep **Tim Probst** came within a few dozen votes of current Republican state Rep. **Lynda Wilson** in the race to

succeed outgoing East Vancouver Republican senator **Don Benton**. Probst is the director of Workforce Development Initiatives at Washington State Employment Security Department and has a strong relationship with local unions. He lost to Benton by just 78 votes in 2012. Wilson, meanwhile, is a noted union foe who has pledged not to take contributions from unions. She's married to Tracy Wilson, who sits on the board of directors of the anti-union Freedom Foundation, which sends paid canvassers out to union members' homes to try to get them to quit their union. Probst and Wilson will face off again in November.

East Vancouver - LD 17, State Representative, Position 1

In the East Vancouver House seat Wilson vacated to run for state Senate, Freedom Foundation staffer **Vicki Craft**, a Republican, was the first place finisher, but labor-endorsed **Sam Kim**, a Navy veteran and Clark County IT worker, placed second in the six-way race. All told, the Democratic candidates totaled 52 percent, so Kim has a decent chance of winning the seat in November.

Longview - LD 19, State Representative, Position 1

J.D. Rosetti, a union-backed incumbent Democratic state rep,

won't be on the November ballot. In a five-way primary, he was several dozen votes short of second-place finisher **Teresa Purcell**, a Democrat. She'll face Republican **Jim Walsh** for the Longview-area seat.

Vancouver - LD 49, State Senate

Labor-backed incumbent Democrat **Annette Cleveland** got 57 percent of the vote in a four-way race, and will face Republican **Lewis Gerhardt** (32 percent) in November.

Vancouver - LD 49, State Representative, Position 1

Labor-backed Democratic incumbent **Sharon Wylie** coasted to victory with 74 percent of the vote. She'll face fellow Democrat **Kaitlyn Beck** in November. No Republican filed for the office.

Vancouver - LD 49, State Representative, Position 2

WSLC-endorsed incumbent **Monica Stonier** took first place in a four-way race with 37 percent. She'll face fellow Democrat **Alishia Topper** in November.

OTHER PRIMARY RESULTS

Governor

Labor-backed incumbent Democrat **Jay Inslee** will face Republican businessman (and Seattle port commissioner) **Bill**

Bryant. In the Aug. 2 matchup, Inslee polled 49 percent to Bryant's 38 percent.

Lieutenant Governor

The candidate who had the most labor support won the most votes: Bellevue state Sen. **Cyrus Habib**, current Democratic Whip. He will face Republican talk show host **Marty McClendon** in November. In a field of 11 candidates, Habib got 22 percent, and McClendon got 19 percent.

Congressional District 3

Incumbent Republican Congresswoman **Jaime Herrera Beutler** will face Democratic state Rep. **Jim Moeller** in the November general election. Moeller led a pack of five challengers, getting 26 percent of the vote, with Herrera Beutler pulling in about 54 percent.

Clark County

Incumbent County Commissioner **David Madore** is out. The controversial Republican took third place in the primary, with 24 percent support. Democrat **Tanisha Harris** came in first with 45 percent and will face Republican **John Blom**, who got 30 percent. Madore won't be missed by local unions; he was a staunch opponent of the Columbia River Crossing, and pushed unsuccessfully for an anti-union "right-to-work" ordinance.

THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO!

Thank you Oregon workers! Working people are the lifeblood of our country. From good paying jobs to the right to organize, I stand with you in our fight to make America work for working Americans.

Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senate

PAID FOR BY JEFF MERKLEY FOR OREGON