WASHINGTON
COURTS

2012 Election Highlights for JISC
Current as of November 17, 2012

The turnout rate for the 2012 regular election was predicted to be 81%, lower than the record-setting 85% in 2008 presidential election, but high nonetheless because of the number of high profile races and issues on the ballot this year. Under the new entirely vote-by-mail system, Washington's voters could begin casting their ballots as early as October 18 when a record 3.9 million ballots were mailed out. Approximately 2.6 million were received by county officials by election night leaving the potential for more than a million votes to continue to be counted as long as they were post-marked by November 6th. Thus, a handful of "too close to call" races could not be determined on Election Day. December 6th is the last day for the Secretary of State to certify the returns, and votes are still being counted.

Governor

Incumbent Governor Chris Gregoire's decision not to run for a third term left an open seat for the Office of Governor. Democratic Congressman Jay Inslee defeated Republican Attorney General Rob McKenna with a 51-49% margin.

Supreme Court

Incumbent Justices Steve González and Susan Owens, who both received over 50% of the vote in the primary election, faced no general election challenger and received 100% of the vote.

In the challenge to replace retiring Justice Tom Chambers, public defense attorney Sheryl Gordon McCloud won, with a 55-45% margin over former justice Richard Sanders.

Lt. Governor

In Washington, the Lt. Governor acts as the President of the Senate, presiding over sessions and voting in the case of a tie. Incumbent Brad Owen (D) is the victor over former state legislator Bill Finkbeiner (R) with a 54-46 margin.

Attorney General

Incumbent Rob McKenna's decision to run for governor left an open seat for State Attorney General. Both candidates were King County Council members. Democrat Bob Ferguson won with a 53-47% margin over Reagan Dunn (R).

Legislature

While many votes remain to be counted, it is clear that the democrats will retain control of both the Washington State House of Representatives and the Senate this year. As many as six attorneys appear to be newly elected.

House

All 98 seats in the House were up for election this year. With three seats too close to call, it is clear that the Democrats will retain control of the House, but the Republicans may pick up a couple of seats.

In the 12th District, challenger Brad Hawkins (R) defeated incumbent Representative Mike Armstrong (R) by a 51-49% margin in a race made possible by Washington's unique top two primary election.

Representative Tim Probst (D-17) decided to run against incumbent Senator Don Benton (R), leaving an open seat. Monica Stonier (D) defeated Julie Olson (R) by 121 votes.

Steve O'Ban, an attorney, picked up an open seat for the Republicans in the 28th, defeating his Democratic challenger Eric Choiniere 55-45.

Democrat challenger Roger Freeman, a Federal Way Council member and public defense attorney, ousted incumbent Katrina Asay (R) by a 55-45 margin in the 30th District.

Republican Linda Kochmar defeated Roger Flygare (D) with 51% for the 30th District open seat vacated by Rep. Mark Miloscia.

In the 47th, incumbent Mark Hargrove (R) narrowly defeated challenger Bud Sizemore (D) with 50.35% of the votes.

Senate

Half of the Senate seats were up for election this year. With one race too close to call, it appears possible that Republicans could gain one seat to narrow the Democratic majority from 27-22 to 26-23.

Two members who were not up for election this year, Sen. Jerome Delvin, R-8, and Sen. Derek Kilmer, D-26, will both step down, having been elected to other offices. New senators must be appointed within 60 days from the time they vacate their seats.

In the 20th, challenger John Braun (R) defeated incumbent Senator Dan Swecker (R) by 56-44 in another race made possible by our top two primary.

Democrats gained a seat in the 5th with Mark Mullet beating Brad Toft (R) by a 54-46 vote for the seat that was vacated by Senator Cheryl Pflug's (R) appointment to the Washington Growth Management Hearings Board.

Democrats lost a seat, however, with incumbent Senator Mary Margaret Haugen (D) losing to Representative Barbara Bailey (R) with a 53-47% vote in the 10th District.

In the 17th, Senator Don Benton (R) narrowly defeated Representative Tim Probst (D) by 100 votes.

Initiatives

Marriage Equality (R-74)
A referendum on last year's legislation to allow same sex couples to marry, passage of R-74 allows the law stand. The measure passed with 53% of the vote.

Legalization of Marijuana (I-502)
I-502 will license and regulate the production, sale, and possession of marijuana. Contrary to federal law, the initiative had many high profile supporters and passed with 56% of the vote.

Reinstating 2/3rds Requirement (I-1185)
This measure to restate the current requirement that tax increases be passed by a two-thirds majority of the legislature or approved by the voters passed for the 5th time, with nearly 64% of the vote.

Charter Schools (I-1240)
This measure creating a public charter school system passed by a 51-49% margin. Charter school initiatives have failed on three previous occasions.

State Officials

Secretary of State
Secretary of State Sam Reed's retirement left an open seat for Secretary of State. Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman (R) defeateddemocrat Kathleen Drew (D) with a 51-49% margin.

State Treasurer
Incumbent Jim McIntire (D) will retain his position as State Treasurer over challenger Sharon Hanek (R). 58-42% margin.

State Auditor
Brian Sonntag's retirement left an open seat for State Auditor. State legislator Troy Kelley (D) defeated James Watkins (R) by a 53-47% margin.

Commissioner of Public Lands
Incumbent Peter Goldmark (D) held his seat over challenger Clint Didier (R). 58-42% margin.

Superintendent of Public Instruction
Incumbent Randy Dorn ran unopposed in the general election, having picked up more than 50% of the vote in the primary.

Insurance Commissioner
Incumbent Mike Kreidler (D) will retain his position as Insurance Commissioner over challenger John R. Adams (R). 58-42% margin.

Congress

On the national level, it is clear that the House will remain in Republican control. In the Senate, the Democrats will retain their majority hold

House

Washington's nine member congressional delegation picked up a new colleague with the addition of a 10th District this summer. With the addition of the 10th, three seats were open this year. The seven incumbents all retained their seats. In the open seats, the Democrats successfully defended their two open seats and picked up the third. In the 1st District, Susan DelBene (D), former state Department of Revenue Director, defeated former state legislator and Snohomish County Council Member John Koster (R) by a 54-46% vote. In the 3rd, state senator Derek Kilmer (D) will replace retiring Congressman Norm Dicks after beating businessman Bill Driscoll (R) by a 58 to 42 margin. Finally, former legislator and TVW co-founder Denny Heck (D) will take the new 10th District seat over Pierce County Council member Dick Muri (R), also by 58-42.

Senate

Senator Maria Cantwell (D) successfully defended her seat against Republican challenger Michael Baumgartner. Senator Patty Murray was not up for election this year.