



Democrats snagged a GOP-leaning state Senate seat in western Wisconsin on Tuesday, buoying progressive hopes that they could ride a wave of victory this fall.

Patty Schachtner, the chief medical examiner for St. Croix County, will take the seat that had been held for 17 years by former Sen. Sheila Harsdorf (R-River Falls). Harsdorf [stepped down in November](#) to take a job as GOP Gov. Scott Walker's agriculture secretary.

In an interview, Schachtner said she thought she beat state Rep. Adam Jarchow (R-Balsam Lake) because the race had turned nasty in mailings from groups outside the district.

"It wasn't nice. It was mean," she said of the campaign literature. "People just said, 'You know what? We're nicer than that.'"

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