

Wisconsin Countdown

Madison, Wis. – As six Republican state senators fight for their political lives, first-term Republican governor Scott Walker's fiscal agenda faces an uncertain future. Today's half-dozen recall elections jeopardize the GOP's senate majority. That bloc is the keystone to the governor's power and was crucial in passing his collective-bargaining reforms and budget cuts earlier this year. Now, thanks to the petitioning union workers who forced the elections, Democrats have an opportunity to pick up the three seats they need to take control of the upper chamber, where Republicans currently hold a 19–14 advantage. Next week, two Democrats are up for recall, but after Sen. Dave Hansen, a Democrat, easily beat a Republican recall effort last month, both parties view the six GOP races as the most important contests of the summer.

In a Monday interview with talk-radio host Charlie Sykes, Walker said that Republicans have a fighting chance to keep their majority. He acknowledged that out of the six campaigns, there are two Republicans – Sen. Dan Kapanke and Sen. Randy Hopper – who are considered the most vulnerable. Kapanke, especially, has been written off by GOP insiders, since he represents a heavily Democratic district. Hopper, for his part, has been plagued by personal problems – his messy divorce and affair with a young Republican aide have been fodder for the state's papers.

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