

How the 189th flipped

What's next with a Democratic House

Kathryne Rubright

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189th

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v. Wade, abortion also proved to be an important issue — especially to women, Probst said, and that often included Republican women in her experience talking to voters.

Probst joins a thin Democratic majority in the House. The Associated Press called the 151st District for Democrat Melissa Cerrato on Nov. 18, giving the party 102 seats in a 203-seat chamber, though the matter is somewhat complicated by three Democratic-held districts that require special elections due to one death and two representatives being elected to higher offices. The state Senate has a Republican majority.

When Democrats were in the minor-

In a narrow majority, every seat counts.

Democrats flipped just enough seats to take control of the Pennsylvania House, and one of the keys to that shift in power is Tarah Probst's victory in the 189th District.

Probst, who was first elected mayor of Stroudsburg in 2015, attributes part of her success in this campaign to her reputation in her current role. During that time, "I think people have grown to know that I am honest, I'm transparent, and that I do work for everybody. And I do my best, especially, to make sure that I get back to everybody, and I'm accessible," she said.

ity, their bills rarely made it to the floor for a vote, Probst said. With even a slight majority, that's no longer the case.

Under the new, close balance of power, "I think it's going to really bring two parties together and try to find some mutual ground," Probst said.

She is optimistic that that will include progress on school funding, a priority that Pennsylvania's next governor, Democrat Josh Shapiro, mentioned during his campaign stop in Stroudsburg earlier this month.

Shapiro said that "when I think about opportunity, I think about our public schools and when I'm your governor, we will fully fund public education."

"So now it's time to fund our schools fairly," Probst said. "By doing that, the people of the 189th, and Monroe County, no matter what district you're in, should definitely reap the benefit of some sort

That work ethic translated into some Republican support in the district, which she won with 56% to restaurateur Steve Ertle's 44%. The seat was open following Republican state Rep. Rosemary Brown's decision to run for Senate in the 40th District, which she won.

"I had three people, literally, at one poll say to me, 'Look, I voted all Republican except for you, because I know how hard you work, and I know how much you care,'" Probst said.

She also noted two issues where she had broad appeal: fair funding for public education, and abortion.

of tax reduction. I'm not going to say it's 50% or 40%. But we're going to start or somewhere. And if it starts off at, you know, 15 or 20%, and we can build on it from there, my God, at least it's something because they have been literally drowning in tax debt."

Meanwhile in Stroudsburg, a new mayor will be appointed. Probst said she wouldn't be required to resign that post, though she would no longer be allowed a salary from it, but she leaves Stroudsburg with an "awesome borough council" and "fantastic" manager and staff.

"Stroudsburg Borough will continue to move forward, whether I'm there or not," she said. "We created that. So I think it's only fair to the people of the 189th that I let someone else take over the reins as mayor, and I focus 100% of my attention on all of the 189th."

She intends to approach the new job

"There's no disrespect" for her predecessor, Probst said. But she points out that a Republican majority in Harrisburg has not relieved the high property tax burden faced by Monroe County homeowners, and "Who has been running the show for us in Monroe County? And I was running in Rosemary Brown's district. For 12 years, our taxes have only gone up."

In the first election after the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe

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the same way she approached being mayor.

"I'm going to work so hard," she said. "And I'm going to work so hard for everybody. The things that I care about will definitely affect every single person in the 189th. I don't want to take away, you know, personal rights. I want to fund schools. I want to reduce school taxes. I want to make sure that women have a right to their body. I want to make sure that there's accessible, affordable health care. I want to make sure that the roads are better. I want to make sure that we bring in good-paying jobs that will sustain families so that they don't have to travel. We have the longest commutes in the nation. Everything I want is going to benefit everybody. And that is what I'm going to work extremely hard to make sure that I do."