

ELECTION 2014: HOUSE DISTRICT 75

Carson unseats Martin

The political newcomer beats the three-term incumbent in four of the five voting precincts in the district.

By Joe Baker
Staff writer

NEWPORT — Local voters opted for a change Tuesday when they elected environmental activist Lauren Carson of Newport to the state House of Representatives, ousting three-term incumbent Rep. Peter F. Martin, D-Newport.

In her first run for elective office, Carson won four of the five voting precincts in House District 75. The final tally in Tuesday's local primary had Carson winning 850-726. Carson will not face an opponent in the general election in November.

Carson, 60, was surrounded by well-wishers for a victory party at her Willow Street apartment, three doors down from Martin's home. It capped a busy day that began for her at 7:30 a.m. Carson said she visited each of the five polling places in the district three times during the day. It was typical of her campaign, in which she said she made an effort to personally visit every Democrat or unaffiliated voter who had voted in at least one of the last four Democratic primaries.

"That was my world," Carson said of the list of primary voters. "I think I tapped into voter disenfranchisement. Voters were frustrated and felt discouraged."

Martin was at Yesterday's restaurant in Washington Square awaiting the results. Approached by a reporter about 8:30, Martin said simply, "I lost," and left the restaurant to make a phone call. After several minutes, Martin returned, but Rep. Cale P. Keable, D-Burrillville, who was helping Martin with his campaign, said Martin would not be making any statement Tuesday night.

As an activist, Carson said, she has been involved in the



Jacqueline Marque | Staff photos

Lauren Carson, second from right, celebrates her victory over incumbent State Rep. Peter F. Martin in her Newport apartment Tuesday night. Below, Rep. Cale P. Keable, D-Burrillville, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and Anne Joslin hold signs for opposing candidates outside Thompson Middle School in Newport shortly before polls closed Tuesday night.

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LAUREN CARSON

political process before. She had worked for other candidates and had experienced the tension as the polls closed, but this was the first time the waiting was for her own campaign. Throughout the campaign, she took a "whatever happens, happens" approach, Carson said. It wasn't until the final moments that anxiety finally got to her, she said.

"I had felt really calm, that no matter what happened, I had tapped in to voters," Carson

said. "But that last 15 minutes (before learning the results), I did get really nervous."

Before polls closed at 8 p.m., supporters of the two candidates sat side by side on a wall outside the Thompson Middle School polling place. Keable said he had been at the school for most of the day. Anne Joslin, who supported Carson, had been there for two hours. The two sat talking amiably for most of that time, Joslin said.

"We like each other," Joslin

said. "I like this guy."

Keable, who is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, said he agreed to help Martin out because "we knew this was going to be a competitive race."

When the Thompson tally was announced after the polls closed, Carson had 89 votes to Martin's 65. Inside City Hall, David R. Carlin III, who was a numbers runner for Martin, said he felt the incumbent was in trouble after hearing the Thompson results. Carlin already knew that Carson won the Donovan Manor vote 236-179 and Martin had taken Rogers

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