

Texas Senator Who Staged Abortion Filibuster May Run for Governor

Democratic Texas State Senator Wendy Davis, whose June filibuster over proposed abortion restrictions captured national attention, said on Wednesday that she would announce on Oct. 3 whether she would seek the governor's office.

Davis, 50, would face an uphill battle to become the first Democrat to win statewide office in Texas since 1994 against Republican state Attorney General Greg Abbott.

Governor Rick Perry is not seeking re-election.

"There's one question I've gotten quite often in the past few months, Davis said in an email statement to supporters. "I've heard it online, while I'm traveling around the state, from the media, and in my Fort Worth neighborhood: What's next?"

Davis, who is also a candidate for her state Senate seat, told supporters: "I'm excited about what we can do together in the future."

Supporters of Davis have urged her to run for governor since the nearly 11-hour Senate filibuster temporarily blocked passage of a measure to ban most abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, impose strict health and safety standards on clinics and limit the use of RU-486, often referred to as the abortion pill.

Davis was already considered a possible future candidate when she launched the filibuster wearing pink running shoes during a special session that was streamed live on websites across the United States.

The filibuster ended consideration of the bill in June, but

Perry called another special session in July and the new restrictions were approved.

Speculation about Davis' political intentions had been building for weeks after her campaign advisers suggested that an announcement was expected by Labor Day.

But Davis' father, Jerry Russell, became critically ill after abdominal surgery. Russell, founder of a popular Fort Worth theater company, died on Sept. 5.

Davis appeared at a few Washington, D.C., fund raisers during the summer, but pulled back from campaigning during her father's illness.

The September issue of Vogue magazine featured Davis, and focused on her as a role model who rose from poverty to a prosperous career in law and politics. At 19, she was a divorced single mother living in a trailer park, but put herself through college and earned a law degree from Harvard.

In the days after the filibuster, Davis quickly raised about \$1 million, but Abbott has a monumental lead in fund-raising with a war chest of nearly \$25 million.

He reported contributions of almost \$4.8 million in a July 15 campaign report, on top of about \$21 million in cash on hand.

(Editing by David Bailey, Greg McCune and Maureen Bavdek)

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