

# CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

POST ELECTION EDITION

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## **WHITMER CLAIMS VICTORY OVER SCHUETTE**

Former Senate Minority Leader and Democrat Gretchen Whitmer turned an early lead into a decisive win over Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette in the 2018 Michigan Governor's Race.

With record-setting mid-term voter turnout and an energized Democratic voting base, her 53 percent to 47 percent victory reflected similar numbers to what most statewide polling had shown since the Democratic primary in August. Whitmer's "Fix the Damn Roads" slogan resonated with Michigan voters, including those who had previously been undecided.

Governor-Elect Whitmer now begins work on the transition by hiring all levels of staff, identifying potential cabinet members, and establishing policy priorities and platforms— before being sworn in as Michigan's 49<sup>th</sup> Governor on Jan. 1, 2019.

## **JOCELYN BENSON CRUISES TO SOS VICTORY**

Democrat Jocelyn Benson will become Michigan's next Secretary of State after defeating Republican Mary Treder-Lang for the key statewide elected office. Benson won the race 53 percent to Treder-Lang's nearly 44 percent.

Formerly the Dean of the Wayne State College of Law, Benson had more name recognition and campaign spending over Treder-Lang, who is an accountant from Grosse Pointe and a member of the Eastern Michigan University Board of Trustees. This was Benson's second run for Secretary of State after losing to Republican Ruth Johnson in 2010. Benson won on the key issues of election integrity, "No Reason" absentee ballot voting, and a 30-minute service guarantee.

## **NESSSEL LEADING AGAINST LEONARD**

In a close race for Michigan's next Attorney General, Democrat Dana Nessel appeared to be ahead of her opponent, Republican Tom Leonard early Wednesday morning. Nessel, a former Wayne County Prosecutor, had 48.2 percent of the vote compared to House Speaker Leonard's 46.9 percent, with 73 percent of precincts reporting.

The two candidates were in stark contrast, while leading one of the most personally charged attack campaigns for Attorney General in recent history. A self-described "activist lawyer," Nessel's campaign focused on consumer protections, suing and shutting down Enbridge's Line 5 across the Straits of Mackinac, and support of abortion rights among other issues. Leonard, a "rule of law" candidate, focused on protecting vulnerable seniors and addressing the mental health system. He also spent time attacking Nessel for alleged workplace hostility incidents.

## **DEMS MAKE GAINS, BUT HOUSE AND SENATE STAY REPUBLICAN**

House and Senate Republicans battled and won enough seats to retain the majority in both chambers of the Legislature on Tuesday. The Senate will have at least 20 Republican wins out of 38 districts with 15 Democrat wins and three undecided seats. House Republicans will have at least 57 seats with Democrats picking up a minimum of five seats and a few seats still too close to call. Several House and Senate seats were closely contested and watched to see if they would flip.

### **State House**

**20th District:** Incumbent Republican Rep. Jeff Noble, R-Plymouth lost to Democrat Matt Koleszar, a Plymouth teacher.

**38th District:** Incumbent Republican Kathy Crawford won against Democrat Kelly Breen for this seat which includes Novi, South Lyon and Walled Lake.

**39th District:** Republican Ryan Berman of Commerce Twp. won over Democrat Jennifer Suidan. Suidan is accused of embezzling over \$100,000 from county treasurer Andy Meisner's campaign.

**40th District:** Democrat Mari Manoogian picked up this house seat currently filled by term-limited Republican Mike McCready, who is running for state Senate. Manoogian beat Republican David Wolkinson.

### **State Senate**

**Senate 7th District:** Democrat Dayna Polehanki defeated Republican Laura Cox for the seat representing Livonia, Northville, Plymouth, Canton and Wayne.

**Senate 10th District:** Macomb Township Republican Michael MacDonald won the hotly contested seat in Macomb County against Rep. Henry Yanez (D-Sterling Heights, keeping the seat Republican).

**Senate 12<sup>th</sup> District:** Republican Rep. Michael McCready from Bloomfield Hills lost to Democrat Rosemary Bayer of Beverly Hills in this Oakland County Senate seat currently held by term-limited Republican Jim Marleau. In a tight race, Bayer ended up with 49.3 percent of the vote while McCready earned 48.6 percent.

**Senate 13th District:** Democrat Mallory McMorrow beat incumbent State Sen. Marty Knollenberg. The district covers Berkley, Royal Oak, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Troy, Clawson, Rochester and Rochester Hills.

**Senate 20th District:** Democrat Sean McCann prevailed over incumbent Republican State Sen. Margaret O'Brien in the race to hold the Kalamazoo County-based seat.

**Senate 24th District:** Republican Army Veteran Tom Barrett prevailed over Democrat Kelly Rossman-McKinney, a longtime public relations professional for the seat representing Clinton, Eaton, Shiawassee, and a portion of Ingham counties to replace term-limited Republican Rick Jones.

**Senate 29th District:** Democrat Winnie Brinks defeated Republican Chris Afendoulis for this Kent County seat to replace term-limited Republican Sen. Dave Hildenbrand (R-Lowell Twp.). The District includes the cities of Grand Rapids, East Grand Rapids and Lowell.

**Senate 38<sup>th</sup> District:** Former Rep. Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan) wins this district over Rep. Scott Dianda (D-Calumet) in an expensive and sharply contested fight in the Upper Peninsula.

## **TIGHT RACES FOR U.S. SENATE AND CONGRESS**

### **Stabenow defeats James**

Incumbent Democrat U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow won reelection by beating Republican John James, and earning 52.02 percent of the vote to James' 45.92 percent of the vote with 54.2 precincts reporting.

### **Bishop loses to Slotkin**

U.S. Rep. Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) lost his seat in the 8<sup>th</sup> U.S. House District to challenger Elissa Slotkin, who was leading by more than 2,000 votes.

## **SUPREME COURT JUSTICES**

Supreme Court Justice Beth Clement was re-elected Tuesday by earning nearly 31 percent of the total votes on the non-partisan ballot.

With 90 percent of the precincts reporting, the second justice seat appears to be going to Democrat Megan Cavanagh who had a 64,073 vote lead over incumbent Justice Kurtis Wilder. As daughter of former Justice Michael Cavanagh, Cavanagh had name recognition, but the least amount of funding of any of the candidates for the court.

Clement and Wilder were appointees of Gov. Rick Snyder seeking their first full-term on the state's highest court.

## **PROPOSALS**

### **Voters approve recreational marijuana proposal**

Michigan residents voted to pass Proposal 1 and legalize the recreational use of marijuana in Michigan. The proposal passed with 57.7 percent of the vote, with 53 percent of the precincts responding. The vote makes Michigan the 10<sup>th</sup> state to legalize recreational marijuana in the U.S.

The proposal sought to regulate marijuana in a way similar to alcohol and allows anyone 21 or older to use, possess, grow and/or sell varying levels of the drug depending on certain circumstances. It also establishes a licensing, taxation and distribution system for the drug. Smoking will be

prohibited in public; and employers, landlords and property owners can still prohibit its use on private property. Operating a vehicle under the influence of the drug would also remain illegal, however, there is currently no field sobriety test for marijuana recognized by law enforcement.

### **Redistricting proposal passes**

The way district boundaries are drawn will change after voters approved Proposal 2 on Tuesday. Previously, the political party in control during the Census controlled the ability to draw district boundaries. This changes with the passage of Proposal 2, which creates a 13-member commission made up of 4 democrats, 4 republican and 5 “independents” as selected from a pool of eligible persons by the Michigan Secretary of State.

### **Michigan voters pass election reform proposal**

Voters also passed one of the least contentious proposals on Tuesday—Proposal 3, known as the Voting Rights Ballot Initiative. The proposal allows for no reason absentee ballots, automatic voter registration when a state ID or driver’s license is issued, restoring the ability to do straight ticket voting and allowing for same day in-person voter registration. The proposal was approved by 67 percent of voters with 46 precincts reporting.