

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

ELECTION EDITION



WHITMER LEADS DEMS TO MAJORITY

Defying polling numbers that seemed to say the race was closing, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer trounced challenger Tudor Dixon to win a second four-year term on Tuesday.

The Democrat, and former Senate Minority Leader, will be leading a Democratic majority in the House and Senate—the first time the party has held majority in both houses in 40 years.

Whitmer defeated Dixon, a Norton Shores businesswoman and former TV commentator, 54.5% to 43.9%. Whitmer received 2,425,440 votes vs. Dixon's 1,956,780 votes.

BENSON AND NESSEL DEFEAT CHALLENGERS, ROLL INTO SECOND TERMS

Democrat Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and Attorney General Dana Nessel completed the Democrat's sweep by also defeating their Republican challengers to remain in office for four more years.

Benson defeated Republican Kristina Karamo 55.4% to 42.3%, and Nessel defeated Republican Matthew DePerno 53% to 45%.

Benson ran on improving lines at local offices, and running elections that “are secure, free and fair.” She has regularly defended the legitimacy of Michigan's elections after she was targeted by Trump after the 2020 election. Her opponent, Karamo, was endorsed by Donald Trump.

The battle for Michigan's Attorney General was close throughout the campaign. Nessel raised far more money than DePerno but campaigned less. She ran on her wins including clergy and Boy Scouts sex abuse convictions, consumer protection initiatives and a domestic terrorism task force. DePerno is a pro-Trump Republican and trial lawyer from Kalamazoo who was also known for his unsuccessful legal challenges of the 2020 presidential election results in Antrim County.

DEMOCRATS GAIN CONTROL OF STATE HOUSE, SENATE

Democrats unhinged the long-held Republican control of the state government with a 20-18 majority in the Senate, and a 56-54 majority in the House. Republicans have held a Senate majority since January 1984, and House majority for the past 12 years.

Outgoing Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) said in a statement, “The people of Michigan have spoken, and however narrowly, have chosen Democrats to control the Senate. While not the outcome I was hoping for, I offer my congratulations to my Democratic colleagues. We will do our part for a smooth transition. Accepting the outcome of an election by no means suggests compromising

one's values. Just the opposite. We have an obligation to continue to advocate for an agenda that is pro-family, pro-freedom, pro-life, pro-energy independence, pro-opportunity, and pro-safety and security for our children."

House Minority Leader Donna Lasinski (D-Scio Twp.), spoke about the Democratic agenda including removing the 1931 state abortion ban from the books, ensuring federal funds go to promised infrastructure, and strengthening public education. Additional past issues include removing right-to-work in Michigan and restoring the prevailing wage, spending on health care and environmental protections, expanding protections under the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity and gun regulations.

Sen. Winnie Brinks of Grand Rapids was chosen by the Democratic caucus to be the next Senate majority leader. The first woman to hold that position in Michigan history.

Rep. Joe Tate from Detroit was elected by his caucus to be the next Speaker of the House. He will be the first Black man to hold the position in Michigan's history and the first Detroit in 25 years.

In addition, somewhat surprisingly, Rep. Abraham Aiyash of Hamtramak was elected floor leader.

For Republicans, Sen. Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton.) will be the Senate Minority Leader, and Rep. Matt Hall (R-Kalamazoo) House Minority Leader in the 102nd Michigan Legislature.

MICHIGAN DEMOCRATS TOP CONGRESSIONAL RACES WITH ONE EXCEPTION

Democrats also won in the U.S. House with Hillary Scholten (D-Grand Rapids) elected to Michigan's 3rd Congressional District. Scholten is the first Democrat to represent the area since 1974. The former U.S. Department of Justice attorney defeated Republican John Gibbs, a former Trump administration employee who had unseated Rep. Peter Meijer (R-Grand Rapids) in the Republican primary in August.

U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-Lansing) also defeated a strong attack by State Senator Tom Barrett (R-Charlotte) to retain her seat, and U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Flint) won his sixth term in Congress, handily defeating Republican challenger Paul Junge by over 10 percentage points.

Republican businessman John James did defeat Democratic former judge and prosecutor Carl Marlinga in Macomb County's newly created 10th Congressional District by a surprisingly close margin. James previously lost two bids for U.S. Senate in 2018 and 2020, and Marlinga losing his bids for the U.S. Senate in 1994 and the U.S. House in 2002.

RESIDENTS PASS ALL THREE PROPOSALS ON MICHIGAN'S BALLOT

PROPOSAL 1 SETS NEW TERM LIMITS FOR STATE LAWMAKERS

Residents passed this proposal to allow changes to the state's term limits and require elected officials to disclose some financial information.

The change includes a move from the limit of three, two-year terms in the House and two, four-year terms in the Senate to an overall 12-year limit in legislative service. Lawmakers and top state executive officials will also be required to file personal financial disclosure reports under the proposal. Passage of the proposal means that current and former lawmakers could now run for office again. 66% of Michigan voters supported Proposal 1.

PROPOSAL 2 ALLOWS FOR EARLY IN-PERSON VOTING

Michigan voters passed Proposal 2 on Tuesday. The proposal allows for nine days of early in-person voting, permits private funds for election administration, requires state-funded absentee ballot boxes and continues to allow registered voters to vote without an ID as long as they sign an affidavit. Prop 2 passed with the identical margin as Proposal 1 .

PROPOSAL 3 AMENDS CONSTITUTION TO INCLUDE ABORTION RIGHTS

Voters also passed Proposal 3 on Tuesday—a constitutional amendment creating the right to reproductive freedom, barring the state from criminalizing abortions, and limiting the potential for abortion regulations. It will permit regulations if the state has a compelling interest to do so after fetal viability. The proposal was passed with 56.7%, or 2,477,707 votes to 43.3% or 1,895,577 votes.

MICHIGAN'S SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Voters chose to reelect the state's incumbent Supreme Court justices Richard Bernstein and Brian Zahra on Tuesday, keeping the Democratic 4-3 advantage on the bench. There were five candidates running for two seats. Bernstein, backed by Democrats, had 33.4 percent of the votes. Zahra, backed by Republicans, had 24.3 percent of the vote. State Rep. Kyra Harris Bolden (D-Southfield) came in third with 21.4% of votes. Bernstein, of the Sam Bernstein Law Firm in Farmington Hills, was first elected to the court in 2014 and is the state's first blind justice. Zahra is from Northville Twp. and was first appointed to the state Supreme Court in 2011, followed by being elected to a partial term in 2012 and a full term in 2014.