

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF JULY 9, 2018

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WHITMER, SCHUETTE LEAD GOVERNOR'S RACE IN LATEST POLL

Recent election polling shows gubernatorial candidates Gretchen Whitmer leading the Democratic race at 40 percent and Attorney General Bill Schuette the leading Republican at 45 percent.

Commissioned by Michigan Information & Research Service (MIRS), the June 24-26 survey showed Whitmer's numbers swinging up significantly over May polling, with Whitmer more than 20 points ahead of both Shri Thanedar and Dr. Abdul El-Sayed. The survey numbers were: Whitmer 40 percent, Thanedar 19 percent, El-Sayed at 17 percent, 22 percent were undecided.

With Whitmer's two opponents fighting for who is more progressive, Whitmer has moved forward significantly over the past two months.

In the GOP race, Schuette has held his lead over Lt. Governor Brian Calley and the two other candidates Sen. Patrick Colbeck (R-Canton) and Dr. Jim Hines. The MIRS Poll shows 45 percent of those replying would choose Schuette over 16 percent for Calley. Colbeck also had 8 percent, and Hines had 4 percent. Twenty-one percent of those polled were undecided.

The survey also polled for general election, showing that if it came to an election between Whitmer and Schuette, Whitmer would lead with 42 percent to 37 percent for Schuette.

Historically in Michigan, the past four races for governor have alternated parties.

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR ARGUMENTS ON REDISTRICTING PROPOSAL

The Supreme Court will hear arguments on whether or not the redistricting proposal from the group Voters Not Politicians is more than a constitutional amendment on July 18.

The order was issued by the Supreme Court last Friday in *Citizens Protecting Michigan's Constitution v. Secretary of State*, requiring involved parties to appear before the court and answer the question of whether or not the proposal involves a constitutional amendment, or is actually redrafting the constitution.

The conservative Citizens Protecting Michigan's Constitution is arguing that the VNP proposal would amend so many parts of the state constitution that a constitutional convention is required.

The group also argues that the proposal does not list all of the sections of the constitution that would be abrogated. The proposal also would give the power to draw legislative and congressional lines once a decade to an independent commission, instead of the current system of having the Legislature draw the lines—often causing claims of partisan gerrymandering.

CPMC also opposed a 2008 ballot issue called Reform Michigan Now which the Supreme Court ruled was in fact a revision of the Constitution.

Proponents of the VNP proposal say that this opinion, however, does not rule out placing complicated amendments in front of the voters, and that this recent proposal only deals with redistricting and not the same amount of issues the 2008 proposal dealt with.

Last month the Court of Appeals unanimously rejected CPMC arguments and ordered the issue to be put on the ballot. Some were surprised the Supreme Court is hearing the case after it refused to stay the Court of Appeals order and the State Canvassers certified the proposal for the ballot.

INGHAM COUNTY PROSECUTOR TURNS SCHUETTE INVESTIGATION OVER TO FBI
Ingham County Prosecutor Carol Siemon turned over a request to investigate Attorney General Bill Schuette to the FBI last week. The request came from attorney Mike Nichols and included allegations that Schuette violated many state laws, especially related to the sale of property Schuette owned in the American Virgin Islands, and if he had staff members from the Department of Attorney General witness documents related to this.

Nichols originally asked Siemon to convene a grand jury investigation into the allegations. Siemon's spokesperson would not confirm that the FBI was contacted, but said it is general practice to refer requests for a criminal investigation to a law enforcement agency which the prosecutor considers appropriate.

Nichols, who was former Rep. Cindy Gamrat's lawyer, released an email he received from Siemon which said "the most appropriate investigative body for this matter is the FBI and I have made that referral."

Governor Rick Snyder also recently commented on the issue, saying that "this is clearly a serious matter if the local prosecutor felt it should be referred to the FBI for investigation."

A Schuette spokesperson has said there is "no concern" about the action because it is a common tactic defense attorneys try against prosecutors. Schuette has not commented on Snyder's statement.

MM&A Briefs

Lawmakers ask for Federal Disaster Declaration in U.P.

Michigan lawmakers and Lt. Governor Brian Calley asked President Donald Trump to issue a federal disaster declaration this week. The declaration would help Upper Peninsula towns and communities recover from severe flood damage caused by strong storms in mid-June. Roads and bridges were damaged in three counties, including at least 60 sinkholes.

Federal aid could include covering some of the infrastructure repair costs, along with grants for temporary housing and property loss loans.

Former DEQ Deputy Director Sygo dies

Former top Michigan Department of Environmental Quality official Jim Sygo passed away last weekend. Sygo was with the state for more than 34 years, spending 13 as a deputy director with the DEQ. He retired in August during the Flint water crisis.

CNBC names Michigan Top-10 state for STEM talent

CNBC called Michigan a “magnet for skilled workers” after its recent study showed Michigan as a top-10 state for talent in science, technology, engineering, and math last week.

Calendar of Important Events

- July 14 Rep. Beau LaFave (R-Iron Mountain) Fundraiser
Location: 7:30 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing
- July 16 Sen. Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) Golf Fundraiser
Location: 8:30 a.m., Country Club of Jackson, Jackson
- Rep. Tommy Brann (R-Wyoming) Fundraiser
Location: 6 p.m., Brann's Steakhouse, Wyoming
- July 19 Rep. Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) Golf Fundraiser
Location: 8:30 a.m., Hidden River Golf & Casting Club, Brutus
- July 20 Rep. Tristan Cole (R-Mancelona) Golf Fundraiser
Location: 9 a.m., Shanty Creek, Summit Course, Bellaire
- July 22 Rep. Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills) Fundraiser
Location: 3 p.m., 21031 Eastfarm Lane Ct., Farmington Hills
- July 23 Rep. Kevin Hertel (D-St. Clair Shores) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., Watermark Bar & Grille, St. Clair Shores
- July 24 Rep. Frank Liberati (D-Allen Park) Fundraiser
Location: 6 p.m., Crystal Park Banquet Center, Allen Park
- July 25 12th Senate District Candidate Rep. Mike McCready (D-Bloomfield) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., 38500 Woodward Avenue, Suite 200, Bloomfield Hills
- July 26 Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr. (D-East Lansing) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., 1860 Boxwood, East Lansing
- Sen. Ken Horn (R-Frankenmuth) Fundraiser
Location: 6 p.m., Slo' Bones BBQ Smokehouse, Frankenmuth
- July 27 U.S. Rep. John Moolenaar (R-Midland) Fundraiser
Location: 5:30 p.m., 1220 Turner St., DeWitt