

# CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF JULY 23, 2018

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## **SCHUETTE, WHITMER STRENGTHEN HOLD ON LEADS AS PRIMARY NEARS**

A new poll from EPIC-MRA for the Detroit Free Press and other outlets has Republican Bill Schuette and Democrat Gretchen Whitmer in the lead for the race for Governor, less than two weeks before the Aug. 7 primary.

In the Republican race, 42 percent of the primary vote would go to Attorney General Bill Schuette, with 24 percent going to his closest rival Lt. Gov. Brian Calley.

If the Democrat primary was held today, the polls show former Senate Minority Leader Whitmer with 49 percent of the vote which is 27 points ahead of her closest rival, Ann-Arbor businessman Shri Thanedar and 30 points ahead of the former director of the Detroit health department, Abdul El-Sayed.

EPIC-MRA President Bernie Porn also noted that for the Democrats, Whitmer is winning among men with 53 percent support and 45 percent among women; El-Sayed is winning among women between the ages of 18 and 49. Thanedar is also doing well in Detroit compared to Whitmer. Whitmer also has a strong showing among older voters, and has 64 percent rating in Mid-Michigan.

For the Republicans, the numbers show Schuette in the low 40s among all subcategories. They also show that President Donald Trump's endorsement of Schuette carries more weight than Snyder's endorsement of Calley.

All of the candidates plan to continue their campaigns as new endorsements come in, including the endorsement of El-Sayed by Independent U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

## **JUDGE DELAYS RULING ON WHETHER NICK LYON WILL STAND TRIAL**

Surrounded by a crowded court room expecting a decision this week, 67th District Court Judge David Goggins said he was delaying his ruling on whether Michigan's Director of Health and Human Services Nick Lyon will go on trial, until Aug. 20—two weeks after the August primary.

Lyon is facing charges of two counts of involuntary manslaughter and misconduct in office regarding the Flint Water Crisis and the 2014-15 Legionnaires' disease outbreak.

The decision will come after 10 months of testimony during the preliminary exam, which started last September with the prosecution witnesses followed by defense witnesses this spring.

Special Flint water prosecutor Todd Flood and defense attorney John Bursch have repeatedly criticized each other throughout the case, as prosecutors argued that Lyons should have warned the public about

the Legionnaires' disease outbreak in the Flint area, and could have saved lives by doing so. Lyon's defense, however, contends that Lyon runs a department with thousands of employees and depended on the expertise of these employees – with none of the employees recommending a public warning. The defense also argued the prosecution did not make a connection between Lyon and the two men who died, saying they died from long-term diseases, not Legionnaires'.

Gubernatorial candidate and Michigan's attorney general Bill Schuette brought the criminal charges against Lyon and 14 other current and former city and state employees.

### **GROUNDBREAKING FOR HOWE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE HELD IN DETROIT**

Governor Rick Snyder, Canadian officials, and bridge officials attended a ceremonial groundbreaking in Detroit for the new Gordie Howe International Bridge. U.S. Ambassador to Canada Kelly Craft also attended the groundbreaking—an action some say could reflect the Trump administration's support for the project.

The owners of the Ambassador Bridge, currently the only bridge to Canada in Detroit, have been asking Trump to revoke a permit from former President Barack Obama concerning the use of Canadian steel for the project. They have also urged Trump not to back the new bridge, but instead support a new Ambassador Bridge.

Gov. Rick Snyder said he thinks the ambassador's support "is a very positive sign that the administration hasn't changed their position. If you look at the comments the president's made, it's all about getting this bridge built from when he went into office." Snyder also thanked the Canadians—who are paying for the majority of the bridge—for sticking with the project.

### **MM&A Briefs**

#### **S&P boosts state's credit rating**

In the first ratings increase for the state of Michigan in 11 years, major Wall Street rating agency Standard & Poor increased the state's credit rating from AA- to AA with a stable outlook and citing the state's "demonstrated resilience following the Great Recession and improved credit fundamentals that we believe will persist through economic cycles."

#### **Snyder Creates Environmental Justice Ombudsman**

A new state ombudsman for environmental justice position has been created by Gov. Rick Snyder to serve as a contact for residents with concerns about environmental justice. Snyder also created an Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group with representatives from different departments.

### **Calendar of Important Events**

July 27            U.S. Rep. John Moolenaar (R-Midland) Fundraiser  
Location: 5:30 p.m., 1220 Turner St., DeWitt

July 29            Rep. Sherry Gay-Dagnogo (D-Detroit) Fundraiser  
Location: 3 p.m., 19440 Bretton, Detroit

- July 30      55th House District Candidate Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor) Fundraiser  
Location: 5 p.m., Carson's American Bistro, Ann Arbor
- Aug. 2      Sen. Dave Hildenbrand (R-Lowell) Fundraiser  
Location: 12 p.m., Deer Run Golf Club, Lowell
- Aug. 7      Primary Elections