

## CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF OCTOBER 29, 2018

*Integrity. Individual Attention. Precision Strategy. Proven Results*



### **REAL TIME MCALVEY MERCHANT ELECTION UPDATES VIA TEXT MESSAGE**

Take advantage of the inside access that being a client of McAlvey Merchant & Associates brings by signing up for our election night text message service.

By signing up, you will receive up to the minute election results on important races around Michigan via your smartphone.

To receive these messages, simply send an email including your name and cellphone number to [cjorae@mcalley.com](mailto:cjorae@mcalley.com). We will keep your number private and never use it for anything other than these updates.

### **REMEMBER TO VOTE!**

With only four days left, remember to clear your calendar and get out to vote on Election Day on Tuesday, Nov. 6. You can find a quick overview of statewide races below and look for election results from us in your inbox on Wednesday, Nov. 7.

Also, if you want to view your sample ballot ahead of time, track the status of your absentee ballot, find out where you vote or to verify your Voter Registration information, visit [www.vote.michigan.gov](http://www.vote.michigan.gov).

### **SCHUETTE, WHITMER RACE TO THE FINISH**

As Election Day draws near, Republican Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, and Democrat Gretchen Whitmer, former state Senate minority leader, continue their battle over who will become Michigan's next governor.

Recent polls show Whitmer leading Schuette anywhere from double digits to only five points. Whitmer has raised more funds and spent more than Schuette, who recently pulled his advertising anywhere outside of Detroit.

Schuette expects to have a strong outcome in northern Michigan, the U.P., west Michigan, and from President Donald Trump supporters in Macomb County. Schuette has reported total fundraising at \$8.6 million.

Whitmer is spending the last days of the race on a 77-stop tour. Her total fundraising for the election is close to \$11.2 million. She is expected to take the votes in Wayne and Oakland Counties.

Top issues between the two have been health care, road funding, and education.

**Healthcare:** Whitmer and other Democrats have cast Schuette as an opponent of insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions, basing their arguments on Schuette's previous lawsuits against the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Schuette has said he favors protecting coverage for people with pre-existing conditions.

**Road funding:** Whitmer's "Fix the Damn Roads" slogan remains a strong message for her supporters. Depending on the House and Senate election results, Whitmer would work to pass a long-term, dedicated revenue source to cover ongoing state-wide road repairs. If this did not work, she would look at placing a general bond issue on a future ballot for voters to decide.

Schuette continues to campaign on growth and tax cuts and said he is committed to the 2015 road plan to increase funding by \$1.2 billion by the 2020-21 fiscal year. He also plans to seek an unidentified amount of additional federal funding. If he plans to sign into law a reduced income tax, eliminate the pension tax, and fully fund the \$600 million General Fund commitment to roads—as he has pledged—then he will need to find an additional \$1.6 billion in spending cuts to balance the budget, without new taxes.

**Education:** In the debate over funding education, Whitmer has said she would use Michigan's School Aid Fund to finance public K-12 schools only. Higher education and community colleges, however, are receiving around \$900 million from the School Aid Fund in the current fiscal year. Removing higher education and community college from the fund would put pressure on the General Fund.

For Schuette, education funding is another element which would be solved by the economic growth in the state which would be generated by his tax cuts.

### **DEMS MAINTAIN LEAD IN ATTORNEY GENERAL / SECRETARY OF STATE POLL**

A recent poll by WDIV/Detroit News shows Democrat Dana Nessel ahead of Republican State House Speaker Tom Leonard in the race for Michigan's new Attorney General, with Nessel leading by a margin of 44.9 percent to Leonard's 34.2 percent. Undecided voters were 16.5 percent.

Thus far in the state AG race, all the public challenge against Ms. Nessel has focused on whether she is too extreme for the state because of her views, or if she lacks the temperament for high office.

The poll also showed less than 1/3 of voters recognized any of the four candidates running for either Attorney General or Secretary of State.

In addition, the poll also shows Jocelyn Benson ahead of Mary Trader Lang in the race for Secretary of State by 45 percent to 33.6 percent, with 16.8 percent undecided.

### **JAMES CHALLENGES U.S. SEN. DEBBIE STABENOW**

Both U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and Republican challenger John James are fighting to the end of the race with packed campaign schedules and increased television ads.

Stabenow, with her statewide campaign "Made in Michigan," has consistently led in the polls although James has narrowed the lead in recent weeks.

## **MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT**

Voters will be choosing two Michigan Supreme Court justices on Tuesday, out of six candidates.

Although on the nonpartisan part of the ballot, candidates are nominated by political parties, with incumbents Kurtis Wilder and Elizabeth Clement nominated by the Michigan Republican Party and Megan Kathleen Cavanaugh and Samuel Bagenstos nominated by the Michigan Democratic Party.

Democrat Sam Bagenstos has raised the most funds for the year in the race, with Justice Elizabeth Clement raising the second most money for the year. Clement was nominated by the Republicans, but did not receive any donations from the party, which gave Wilder a \$100,000 donation.

## **TOP HOUSE AND SENATE DISTRICTS IN PLAY**

With hard fought races all around the state, Democrats are hoping for a chance to seize control of either or both the Michigan House and Senate. They would need to turn over nine seats in each chamber in order to gain control. This is more likely happen in the House, which Republicans have controlled since 2011.

A few House races in the spotlight:

**17th District:** Incumbent Republican Joseph Bellino (R-Monroe) vs. Democrat Michelle LaVoy. The district goes from Monroe to Flat Rock.

**19th District:** Democrat Laurie Pohutsky, a lab technician from Livonia, is racing against Republican and Livonia City Councilman Brian Meakin to fill a seat vacated by term-limited state Rep. Laura Cox. Cox is running for state Senate.

**20th District:** Incumbent Republican Rep. Jeff Noble, R-Plymouth is fighting to protect his seat from Democrat Matt Koleszar, a Plymouth teacher. The district covers Plymouth and Northville and part of Canton.

**38th District:** Incumbent Kathy Crawford, R-Novı, is battling Kelly Breen, D-Novı, The district includes Novı, South Lyon and Walled Lake.

**39th District:** Recent polling shows that the 39th House seat remains very competitive, even despite the fact that the democratic candidate, Jennifer Suidan was recently charged with embezzling over \$100,000 from county treasurer Andy Meisner's campaign. Suidan faces Republican Ryan Berman for this seat currently held by term-limited Republican Klint Kesto. The district includes Commerce Township and part of West Bloomfield.

**40th District:** Dems are hoping to pick up this seat currently filled by term-limited Republican Mike McReady who is running for state Senate. Mari Manoogian is vying for the seat with Republican David Wolkinson. The district includes Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, and part of West Bloomfield.

**41st District:** Democrat Padma Kuppa is battling Republican Doug Tietz to replace term-limited incumbent Martin Howrylak. The district represents Troy and Clawson.

## **STATE SENATE RACES TO WATCH:**

**7th District:** Republican Laura Cox is battling for the seat with Democrat Dayna Polehanki in a race that has seen more than \$930,000 in spending for a district that includes Livonia, Northville, Plymouth, Canton, and Wayne.

**10th District:** Democratic State Rep. Henry Yanez is vying for this seat with Republican Mike McDonald. The seat currently held by term-limited Republican Tory Rocca represents Sterling Heights, Macomb Township, and part of Clinton Township. McDonald appears to be one of the few potential bright spots for Republicans.

**12th District:** Democrats hope to win this seat in Oakland County with Rosemary Bayer facing Republican State Rep. Mike McCready. More than \$400,000 in advertising has been spent. The seat is currently held by term-limited Republican Jim Marleau and includes Keego Harbor, Sylvan Lake, Pontiac, and north.

**13th District:** Democrat Mallory McMorrow is in a tight race to beat incumbent Republican Marty Knollenberg. The district covers Berkley, Royal Oak, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Troy, Clawson, Rochester, and Rochester Hills.

**15th District:** In this seat being vacated by term-limited Sen. Mike Kowall (R-White Lake), state Rep. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake) is battling Democrat Julia Pulver. The district includes Commerce, Lyon, Milford, West Bloomfield and White Lake Townships and the cities of Novi, South Lyon, Orchard Lake, Walled Lake, and Wixom.

**20th District:** Incumbent Republican Margaret O'Brien is being challenged for this seat by former Democratic State Rep. Sean McCann and Libertarian Party candidate Lorence Wenke, the same three faced off in 2014. Almost \$500,000 has been spent in the race to hold the Kalamazoo County based seat.

**24th District:** Republican Tom Barrett, an Army veteran, and Democrat Kelly Rossman-McKinney, a longtime public relations professional, are battling for the counties of Clinton, Eaton, Shiawassee, and a portion of Ingham County. The seat is currently held by term-limited Republican Rick Jones. Analysts are looking to see if the self-funded Rossman-McKinney will be able to ride the pink wave.

**29th District:** Republican Chris Afendoulis is vying with Democrat Winnie Brinks in a tight race for this district in Kent County to replace term-limited Republican Sen. Dave Hildenbrand (R-Lowell Twp.). Polling suggests Winnie Brinks is poised to take the lead in this contested seat that Republicans have held for many years. The district includes the cities of Grand Rapids, East Grand Rapids, and Lowell.

## **RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA AND REDISTRICTING PROPOSALS COULD PASS, EASIER VOTING ACCESS ALSO ON BALLOT**

### *Proposal 1 – Legalizing Recreational Marijuana*

Analysts say this proposal to make recreational marijuana legal in the state of Michigan could be passed by voters on Tuesday, making Michigan the 10th state in the country and Washington D.C. to legalize pot.

Anyone 21 and older living or visiting the state will be able to buy, possess, and use marijuana and/or marijuana-infused edibles in the state. They can also grow up to 12 marijuana plants in their homes for personal use.

### *Proposal 2 – Independent redistricting commission*

Voters could be poised to approve this proposal which was placed on the ballot after a fight that went to the Michigan Supreme Court. The proposal would amend the state constitution and create an independent commission of 13 people: Four Republicans, Four Democrats and Five Independents. That commission would then be tasked with drawing the new state lines that are "geographically compact and contiguous districts of equal population."

### *Proposal 3 – Voting Access*

This third proposal involves making access to voting and ballots easier. The proposal includes allowing people to automatically be registered to vote when they apply for, update, or renew their driver's license or state ID card unless they choose not to, and not needing a reason to get an absentee ballot.

## **Calendar of Important Events**

Nov. 6            General Election