

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 2, 2020

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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION STILL COUNTING

Days after Election Day, counties in several states are still working to finish counting ballots to determine who will be the next President. As of this morning, Joe Biden holds 253 Electoral Votes compared to President Trump's 213. Numbers remain close in the battleground states of Pennsylvania (20 Electoral Votes), Georgia (16 Electoral Votes) and Arizona (11 Electoral Votes).

MICHIGAN HOUSE ELECTS WENTWORTH AS NEW SPEAKER FOR 2021-22 TERM

Republicans in the state House chose Rep. Jason Wentworth (R-Clare) on Thursday to be the next Speaker of the House for the 2021-22 term. The caucus also elected Rep. Ben Frederick, a longtime legislative aide before being elected to the House, as the incoming majority floor leader.

First elected in 2016, Wentworth is a U.S. Army veteran and former military police officer. He has worked in both public and private law enforcement and is currently chairman of the House Select Committee on Reducing Car Insurance Rates.

"These are challenging times – politically, socially, and economically – and people are worried about their future," Wentworth said. "It is our duty to demonstrate steady leadership and bold solutions, and that's exactly what we'll do," Wentworth said in a press release.

"I'm a father of three and consider my children and their future in every decision I make. In the 101st Legislature, we will make major decisions and create life-changing policies only after seeking the input of the people they impact," he said.

Wentworth will replace outgoing speaker Lee Chatfield (R-Levering), who was term limited.

Wentworth does not formally become speaker until the 101st Legislature convenes on January 13, 2021 and the House elects officers.

Other leadership roles chosen by the House Republican Caucus for 2021-20 include:

- **Speaker Pro-Tempore:** Pamela Hornberger (R-Chesterfield Twp.)
- **Associate Speaker Pro-Tempore:** Sarah Lightner (R-Springport) & Brad Paquette (R-Niles)
- **Assistant Majority Floor Leaders:** Ann Bollin (R-Brighton) & Julie Calley (R-Portland)
- **Majority Whip:** Andrea Schroeder (R-Independence Twp.)
- **Deputy Whip:** Jack O'Malley (R-Lake Ann)
- **Caucus Chair:** Matt Hall (R-Emmett Twp.)
- **Caucus Vice Chair:** Andrew Beeler (R-Fort Gratiot). Incoming representative for the 83rd House District.

HOUSE DEMS CHOOSE LASINSKI

The state House Democratic Caucus chose Rep. Donna Lasinski (D-Scio Twp.) as its minority leader for the 2021-22 legislative term, and Rep. Yousef Rabhi for a second term as the Minority Floor Leader. Lasinski will succeed House Minority Leader Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills).

MICHIGAN JUDGE RULES AGAINST TRUMP CAMPAIGN INJUNCTIVE RELIEF MOTION

Court of Claims Judge Cynthia Stephens ruled against the reelection campaign of President Donald Trump on Thursday as it tried to halt the counting and processing of absentee voter ballots in Michigan.

On Wednesday, Trump campaign attorneys in the *Donald J Trump for President, Inc. v. Benson* (COC 20-000225) case, filed suit and a motion for immediate declaratory relief, saying the campaign did not have meaningful access to absentee counting locations, that challengers had been barred from viewing surveillance video of local drop boxes, and that at least one challenger was removed from a location in Roscommon County.

Trump campaign attorney Mark "Thor" Hearne also filed a motion for emergency injunctive relief on Thursday and a brief acting as supplementary evidence of alleged fraud, claiming that a challenger had been told by a poll worker in Detroit that they were instructed to change the received by dates of some ballots from Nov. 4 to Nov. 2 – a day before Election Day.

Judge Stephens arranged a hearing Thursday morning. After oral arguments from both parties, Ms. Stephens ruled from the bench that the requested relief would not be granted and that a written order would be entered Friday.

The Democratic National Committee was allowed to argue its case through an amicus brief but was not granted a motion to intervene.

U.S. HOUSE 11TH DISTRICT RESULTS

The race between U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens (D-Rochester Hills) and Republican Eric Esshaki was finally called on Thursday morning, with Stevens defeating Esshaki by 50%-48%.

By winning the seat originally in 2018, Stevens flipped what had been a Republican-leaning district. The area covers western Wayne County and southeastern Oakland County.

Esshaki is a Birmingham lawyer and former nurse. This was his first run for public office.

RECORD VOTER TURNOUT IN MICHIGAN

Michigan voters broke records on Tuesday, with 5,563,279 ballots cast — the most in any election the state has ever held.

In the 2016 election, 4,874,619 voted. The largest number before this was 2008 when just over 5 million voted. In Oakland County, 97,068 more people voted than in 2016, with Wayne County having an increase of 78,950 votes, Macomb had 74,741 more ballots and Kent County had 48,678 votes.

MM&A Briefs

Olson named Acting Director of Unemployment Insurance Agency

Liza Estlund Olson has been named acting director of the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency after former Director Steve Gray resigned on Thursday.

Representatives from Governor Gretchen Whitmer's office did not report whether Gray resigned voluntarily or if he was asked to leave.

Olson was the director of the Michigan Office of the State Employer. She will be replaced by deputy director of the Office of the State Employer, Cheryl Schmittziel.

Randall to Stay for One More Year

House Clerk Gary Randall has agreed to continue his role for one more year, after Speaker-elect Jason Wentworth asked him to consider staying. The Majority party elects the clerk, while the minority party recommends to the speaker an assistant clerk. Randall, 77, said he will continue the role for one year, but probably not the entire term.