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CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

PRIMARY ELECTION EDITION

McAlvey Merchant & ASSOCIATES

FROM THE PARTNERS DESK

Rusty Merchant

Thanks to our friends at Gongwer and our partnership, we are able to provide you with articles that sum up the Primary Election from last night in addition to our text updates that many clients received last night. If you missed out and would like to sign up for these updates for the General Election, please email our office at cjorae@mcalvey.com.

The big takeaways are the lack of open seats and likely new members due to the extension of term limits at the last election and the fact that the primary races in targeted seats that will determine majority had outcomes aligning with what each caucus thought it's best chance for winning. Outcomes that have no impact on the General Election but change the makeup of the House next term include the loss of two Republican incumbents Rep. Bob Bezotte in Livingston County and Rep. Neil Friske in Petosky. All Democratic incumbents won their primaries including Rep. Regina Weiss and Rep. Mike McFall in Wayne and Oakland Counties.

NEWS

FRISKE, BEZOTTE TOPPLED; MCFALL, OTHER INCUMBENTS SAIL TO VICTORY

Tuesday's primary saw two incumbents fall in the House, with voters in the 107th and 50th Districts deciding that their current representatives will not have the opportunity to return to Lansing next term.

Parker Fairbairn of Harbor Springs defeated Rep. Neil Friske (R-Charlevoix) in the 107th House District by a wide margin.

Friske's race was expected to be close, but ultimately, it was a runaway.

Fairbairn won 10,689 votes to Friske's 6,260. In the lead up to the primary, Fairbairn received several endorsements over Friske and outspent him in campaigning. Friske was also arrested in Lansing at the end of June, which was widely reported by state and local media. He has yet to be formally charged.

During his campaign, Fairbairn focused on Friske's ultra-conservative voting record and lack of committee assignments, saying that Friske was failing to get anything done for the district in Lansing.

In a post to X, formerly Twitter, Friske responded to the election loss Wednesday morning.

"The people of the 107th have spoken, and now it falls upon us to accept the unfortunate outcome," he wrote. "In Lansing, where conformity often overshadows conviction, I've made it my mission to stand firm on principles that matter – principles that I feel are essential to conservatives. It's not about seeking approval or popularity;

rather embodying integrity and serving the people of the 107th District … It is evident that God has a different plan for my life. Therefore, I look forward with anticipation to following His leading down whatever path he puts before me."

Rep. Bob Bezotte Jr. (R- Howell) also fell to a primary challenger during Tuesday's election.

The incumbent, who was out of the race and back in it this year, was defeated by primary challenger Jason Woolford, whom Bezotte originally endorsed before deciding to run for reelection.

The race was close. With more than all precincts reporting, Bezotte brought in 4,247 votes to Woolford's 4,723 votes, according to unofficial election results.

Other incumbents held on, despite close races.

In the 3rd House District, Rep. Alabas Farhat survived his primary challenge. Despite early numbers showing him behind former Dearborn City Commissioner Ziad Abdulmalik, Farhat retook the lead in the Dearborn portion of the district and led in Detroit to secure his candidacy.

Apart from Friske, the ultra-conservative members of the House crushed their primary challengers.

Rep. Josh Schriver (R-Oxford) won in Oakland County and came out ahead in the Macomb County portions of the 66th House District. With all precincts reporting, Schriver won 8,494 votes to challenger Randy LeVasseur's 4,414, according to unofficial election results.

In the 51st House District, Rep. Matt Maddock similarly cruised to victory, despite early and intense campaigning from primary opponent Kevin Ziegler. With about all precincts reporting, Maddock won 6,205 votes to Ziegler's 4,354 votes, according to unofficial election results.

Another ultra-conservative member of the House, Rep. Steve Carra (R-Three Rivers) also had an easy victory Tuesday night. Carra won 9,267 votes in the Republican primary, or about 69 percent of the vote. His two primary opponents together won about 31 percent of the vote, with Frank Perez winning 2,755 votes and Michael Malmborg winning 1,470, according to unofficial election results.

Overall, incumbents with primaries did well in their districts and will be on the ballot in November.

Rep. Gina Johnsen (R-Lake Odessa) easily swatted away a primary challenger from the right in the 78th House District. She took more than 70 percent of the vote, winning 8,032 votes compared to ultra-conservative Jon Rocha, who won 3,438.

In the 109th, Rep. Jenn Hill (D-Marquette) skated away with the Democratic primary, despite having several opponents. She won 80 percent of the vote, with 9,639 votes. Her next closest opponent, Randy Girard, took just 15 percent of the vote, with 1,889.

The primary challenge from former Warren mayor James Fouts against current Rep. Mike McFall (D-Hazel Park) failed – massively.

McFall will be on the ballot in November with a high likelihood of returning to Lansing next term, while Fouts' bid to return to political office has come up short.

McFall beat Fouts decidedly across the district, even in Warren, where Fouts served as mayor for more than a decade. McFall won 6,491 votes to Fouts' 2,648. McFall also spent considerably less than Fouts on the primary and is headed toward November with about $48,000 cash-on-hand.

The two newest members of the House on the primary ballot, Rep. Mai Xiong (D-Warren) in the 13th House District and Rep. Peter Herzberg (D-Westland) in the 25th House District, also secured their primary bids.

Xiong rolled with a whopping 71 percent of the vote in the 13th House District. Her opponent, former state representative and Roseville Clerk Richard Steenland took a tiny 19 percent of the vote. Xiong won every precinct in Roseville.

Herzberg beat out several other Democrats on the ticket, with his main competition being Layla Taha, who, like Herzberg, ran for the seat during the special election in April. Herzberg held on, winning 53.1 percent of the vote compared to 31.5 percent of the vote for Taha, according to unofficial election results.

In the 5th House District, Rep. Regina Weiss (D-Oak Park) won just under 50 percent of the vote in the Democratic primary. She took 6,565 votes to her opponent Crystal Bailey's 5,354 votes, according to unofficial election results and with about 70 percent of precincts reporting.

House Speaker Joe Tate (D-Detroit) breezed through his primary challenge. He took 74 percent of the vote, beating out primary challenger Lory Parks with 7,626 votes to 2,002 votes.

Across the aisle, Minority Leader Rep. Matt Hall (R-Richland Township) also easily defeated his primary opponent.

With all precincts reporting, Hall won about 64 percent of the vote, or 6,220 votes compared to challenger Rich Cutshaw's 3,516.

In recent weeks, PACs, including Young Americans for Liberty, spent significant amounts of money running negative ads against Hall for his votes on gun control legislation, but based on unofficial election results, they did little to sway the electorate.

Rep. Brian BeGole (R-Antrim Township) easily won his primary in the 71st House District, securing 6,129 votes compared to his opponent, Kevin Rathburn's 2,947, according to unofficial election results and with about 85 percent of precincts reporting.

Similarly, Rep. Emily Dievendorf (D-Lansing) won their primary, trouncing opponent Angela Matthews. Dievendorf won 6,273 votes to Matthews' 3,187 votes, according to unofficial election results.

Rep. Cam Cavitt (R-Cheboygan) will also be back on the ballot for the 106th House District in November. He secured his primary, winning 58 percent of the vote. Cavitt won 10,043 votes compared to his opponent, Todd Smalenberg, who won 7,175.

In the 28th House District, Rep. Jamie Thompson (R-Brownstown Township) easily took her primary. She won with more than 90 percent of the vote, crushing Beth Socia with 2,856 votes to Socia's 338, according to unofficial election results and with 45 percent of precincts in the district reporting.

Several other incumbents also faced primary challengers and won, including Rep. Tyrone Carter (D-Detroit) in the 1st House District, Rep. Natalie Price (D-Berkley) in the 6th District, Rep. Helena Scott (D-Detroit) in the 8th District, Rep. Veronica Paiz (D-Harper Woods) in the 10th District, Rep. Kimberly Edwards (D-Eastpointe) in the 12th House District, Rep. Stephanie Young (D-Detroit) in the 16th District, Rep. Dylan Wegela (D-Garden City) in the 26th District, Rep. Doug Wozniak in the 59th, Rep. Phil Green (R-Watertown Township) in the 67th District, Rep. Cynthia Neeley (D-Flint) in the 70th District, Rep. Joseph Fox (R-Fremont) in the 101st District, Rep. John Roth (R-Interlochen) in the 104th District and Rep. Ken Borton (R-Gaylord) in the 105th

Tuesday's primary also decided the contenders for seats that will be open in November which lean comfortably Democratic or Republican.

In the 64th House District, Joe Pavlov, former teacher and cousin of former Sen. Phil Pavlov narrowly won the Republican primary. The seat is in a safe Republican district currently represented by Rep. Andrew Beeler (R-Port Huron).

Pavlov won a close race, where he beat out St. Clair County Commissioner Jorja Baldwin and former Rep. Gary Eisen.

With all precincts reporting, Pavlov won 3,793 votes to Baldwin's 3,581 votes. Eisen came in third just behind Baldwin with 3,401 votes.

Elsewhere across the state, Matt Longjohn will be the Democratic candidate looking to fill outgoing Rep. Christine Morse's seat in the 40th House District in November.

With about 23 percent of precincts reporting, Longjohn had 1,642 votes, or about 71 percent. The other Democratic candidate, Lisa Brayton, had just 682 votes, or about 29 percent, according to unofficial election results.

Tonya Myers Phillips of Detroit handily won the Democratic primary in the 7th House District, which will be an open seat in November because Rep. Abraham Aiyash (D-Hamtramck) is not seeking reelection. Myers Phillips has 65 percent of the vote with about 15 percent of the district reporting.

For the open seat in the 33rd House District, Morgan Foreman won the Democratic primary. Foreman – a legislative staffer for Rep. Felicia Brabec (D-Pittsfield Township), who currently holds the seat – beat out Rima Mohammad, a trustee for Ann Arbor Public Schools. Foreman won 11,258 votes compared to Mohammad's 5,572 votes, according to unofficial election results.

Tuesday's election also set up some of the state's most competitive general election House races.

Adam Stathakis of Livonia will run on the Republican ticket against Rep. Matt Koleszar (D-Plymouth) in the 22nd House District. Stathakis, a business owner from Livonia, won 71.5 percent of the Republican primary vote, beating out Christian Charette.

In the 27th House District, Rylee Linting will run against Rep. Jaime Churches (D-Wyandotte). Linting won 4,904 votes compared to her opponent Cody Dill's 1,346.

The 38th House District is set to be a rematch between Rep. Joey Andrews (D-St. Joseph) and Kevin Whiteford, who lost to Andrews in 2022. Whiteford, who faced a rematch in the primary against George Lucas, won 4,007 votes to Lucas's 3,228, with 84% of precincts reporting.

For the first time in several election cycles, Rep. Jim Haadsma (D-Battle Creek) will face off against a new Republican opponent. Calhoun County Commissioner Steven Frisbie decisively won the Republican primary in the 44th House District, coming away with 2,197 votes. His next closest opponent, Alexander Harris, a gym owner out of Albion, won just 518 votes.

Republican Brian Ignatowski comfortably won his primary in the 48th House district with 5,677 votes compared to Tawn Beliger's 2,746 votes. Ignatowski will take on Rep. Jennifer Conlin (D-Ann Arbor) in November.

The race for the 55th House District is now set, too, with Trevis Harrold winning the Democratic primary for the chance to take on Rep. Mark Tisdel (R-Rochester Hills) in November. Harrold won 4,859 votes to Alexander Hawkins's 4,347 votes, according to unofficial election results.

The race for the 57th House District will be a rematch of 2022. Aisha Farooqi won the Democratic primary with 70 percent of the vote, according to unofficial election results, and will once again run against Rep. Tom Kuhn (R-Troy) in the general.

Ron Robinson of Utica defeated Roger Goodrich of Sterling Heights in the 58th House District Republican primary to take on Rep. Nate Shannon (D-Sterling Heights) in November. Robison came out of the primary with 2,517 votes compared to Goodrich's 1,178 votes.

One of the few races too close to call as of 4 a.m. Wednesday was the Republican primary to see who will take on Rep. Denise Mentzer (D-Mount Clements) in the 61st District. Robert Wojtowicz and Russ Cleary were only 56 votes apart with Wojtowicz in the lead with just 33 percent of precincts reporting.

In the 84th House District, Republican John Wetzel will challenge Rep. Carol Glanville (D-Walker). Wetzel won more than 87 percent of the vote with 6,425 votes to Ben June's 937.

In the 103rd, Lisa Trombley is set to take on Rep. Besty Coffia (D-Traverse City). Prior to the primary, Republicans following the race said that Trombley was a good fit for the district, which is bound to make the race for the seat Coffia flipped in 2022 competitive. Trombley won 62.5 percent of the votes in Tuesday's Republican primary, beating Katie Kniss 9,032 votes to 4,503.

On the Republican side in the 109th House District, former TV meteorologist Karl Bohnak won his primary, securing about 71 percent of the vote, according to unofficial election results. Bohnak won 2,846 votes, and Burt Mason, who finished second, won 792. Melody Wagner won 354. Bohnak will face Hill for the general election.

ROGERS, SLOTKIN ADVANCE, WILL SQUARE OFF IN U.S. SENATE GENERAL ELECTION

Democratic U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin and former U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers easily dispatched their U.S. Senate primary election opponents Tuesday, setting up an expensive and bruising general election contest with control of the chamber on the line.

The victories by Slotkin and Rogers bring to reality the expected dogfight in the general election as Democrats seek to hold the open seat held by retiring U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Lansing). Republicans are hoping to win their first U.S. Senate race in Michigan since 1994.

Unofficial results, with 76 percent of precincts reporting, had Slotkin earning 77 percent of the vote, compared to 23 percent for actor and Detroit businessowner Hill Harper.

For Rogers, of White Lake, unofficial results with 76 percent of precincts reporting had him with 63 percent of the vote, followed by former U.S. Rep. Justin Amash of Cascade Township with 16 percent of the vote. Sherry O'Donnell of Stevensville was at 12 percent. Grosse Pointe business executive Sandy Pensler, who dropped out of the race weeks ago after the primary ballot had already been finalized, earned 8.8 percent.

Each victory was a triumph for both. Slotkin showed her strength in new areas, like Macomb County, where she dominated by a better than 3-to-1 margin, and Kent County, where she almost had a 4-to-1 margin over Harper. Meanwhile, Rogers, who had not been on a ballot in Michigan in 12 years systematically dominated the Republican primary and was able to blend the Trump and old school wings of the party. He even crushed Amash in Kent County, Amash's home county that he represented in the U.S. House, 50 percent to 34 percent.

Both candidates in their victory speeches pivoted to the general election.

"The contrast between us could not be clearer," Slotkin said. "Quite simply, the selection will come down to between a choice of service to country or service to self."

She then spoke of the divisions between the two parties, saying it used to be a matter of Republicans versus Democrats, right versus left.

"Today we find ourselves at a very, very different time. It's rational versus extreme. That's it, that's the whole debate," Slotkin said. "'My message is simple: join us on 'team normal.' Join us on choosing hope over fear."

Rogers said after a hard-fought race, the party now needs to "row in the same direction" to secure Republican victories in November.

He shared stories about conversations with voters who have suffered from a tough economy and the story of a member of law enforcement whose daughter died from fentanyl. Rogers said Democratic policies have led to high inflation, open borders and an increased flow of drugs into the country.

"When they talk about all these things, and they're reinventing themselves, and they're telling you we are not liberal … don't pay attention to any of it," Rogers said. "We have to stand up and let people understand that there are people behind these decisions."

Rogers said Republicans must work to ensure Michigan residents who work hard each day to get by that they have their backs.

"This election is the most consequential election, I think, in my lifetime," Rogers said. "We are going to change things for the better and get Michigan back on track, or we are going to let the Democrats take us to a place no one wants to live."

Slotkin, who has three competitive congressional race wins under her belt, has worked to improve her name recognition across the state and was rewarded, withstanding the challenge from Harper. He had sought to consolidate the party's more progressive wing while touting himself as someone who better represents Michigan's diverse population.

But Slotkin took Washtenaw County by a 4-to-1 margin, a huge setback for Harper's hopes to bring aboard the party's most liberal voters.

Stabenow in a statement endorsed Slotkin shortly after the race was called for her.

"It's clear she knows what it takes to be a great legislator. She understands the skills you need in the Senate – not just to give speeches – but to actually get things done," Stabenow said. "I'm excited to pass the torch at the end of the year and see Elissa Slotkin represent Michigan in the halls of the U.S. Senate."

Rogers was recruited by the National Republican Senatorial Committee, which sees his national security background while in Congress and skill at retail politics as best suited in helping the party put the seat back in their control.

"Mike will work to restore our economy, secure the southern border, and ensure Michigan families have a voice they can trust in Washington," NRSC Chair U.S. Sen. Steve Daines (R-Montana) said in a statement. "Mike's opponent, Elissa Slotkin, has a perfect 100% voting record for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris's policies that have made life unaffordable, opened our southern border, and unleashed chaos around the world."

The endorsement of Rogers by former President Donald Trump in March also provided a significant boost for the long-time primary frontrunner.

Michigan Democratic Party Chair Lavora Barnes in a statement took aim at Rogers, attacking him as self-serving and for having lived in Florida after leaving Congress before returning to Michigan to run for office.

"Rogers wants to enact a dangerous agenda: banning abortion, supporting tax giveaways for big corporations, and jeopardizing Social Security and Medicare – and that's exactly why Michiganders will reject him and his self-serving politics in November," Barnes said.

U.S. Sen. Gary Peters (D-Bloomfield Township), chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, in a statement made a similar attack on Rogers while praising Slotkin for her work in Congress.

"Elissa Slotkin has dedicated her life to defending our country, serving our state and fighting for the priorities that matter most to Michiganders that work for a living," Peters said. "Elissa puts the interest of Michiganders first in everything she does – and those are the values I know she'll bring to the Senate."

U.S. HOUSE PRIMARIES DONE, SEVERAL COMPETITIVE RACES SET FOR NOVEMBER

After the conclusion of Tuesday's U.S. House primaries, competitive general election races are taking shape in the 8th, 10th and 3rd Districts, which are expected to be expensive and critical for both Republicans and Democrats in the coming months.

Unlike the 7th District, where there was no contest for the Democratic and Republican nominations and the Tom Barrett vs. Curtis Hertel Jr. contest has been known for some time, there was still some question who would face off in the other three.

U.S. Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Detroit) declared victory in the 13th District Democratic primary over Mary Waters. With 144 of 391 precincts reporting, Thanedar had a 54 percent to 34 percent lead. Waters tied Thanedar in the Detroit portions of the district that had reported. She needed to win the city by a big number to overcome Thanedar's strength in the suburbs.

The stage is set for Sen. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Bay City) and Republican Paul Junge of Fenton to compete for retiring U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee's (D-Flint) seat in the 8th District. Both emerged decisively from their primaries.

With 83 percent of the precincts reporting, McDonald Rivet earned 55 percent of the Democratic primary vote, followed by former Flint mayor Matt Collier at 25 percent and State Board of Education

President Pamela Pugh at 20 percent. Junge clobbered Mary Draves with 75 percent to her 15 percent.

Speaking to union members at her election night party in Saginaw, McDonald Rivet thanked campaign volunteers and supporters and drew a contrast between herself and Junge, who has largely self-funded his campaign.

"I am honored by your trust and excited to be your nominee. Now, we move forward to November, and the choice is clear," McDonald Rivet said. "While I have deep roots in our communities and a proven, bipartisan record of lowering costs for mid-Michiganders, Paul Junge is trying for a third time to use his trust fund to buy our U.S. House seat. He doesn't know us, and he does not understand families who work hard to make ends meet."

Junge lost a 2020 bid for a different district and a 2022 challenge to Kildee.

Kildee joined McDonald Rivet at the rally and reiterated his endorsement of her candidacy.

"The people of mid-Michigan have spoken, and they want Kristen McDonald Rivet to be their next Representative in Congress," Kildee said in a statement. "The choice in this election is a choice between two very different paths – Kristen, who is a lifelong Michigander who raised her six kids in this community, versus her Republican opponent, a California trust fund millionaire who is not from here but is trying for a third time to buy a seat in Congress."

Collier outspent McDonald Rivet, but had little to show for it, struggling to stay ahead of Pugh, who had little money.

Junge declared victory shortly before midnight on Tuesday and attributed his victory to his staunch support of former President Donald Trump, who endorsed him, and conservative policy stances on issues like immigration and what he called the failed economic policies of the Biden-Harris administration.

"I am grateful voters responded to my commitment to secure the border, rebuild our economy, and take on the many failures in Washington DC," Junge said in a statement. "Our country is headed in the wrong direction, and I will use my experience in the Trump administration securing the border, as a criminal prosecutor, and business owner to fight hard for the people of Mid-Michigan."

Draves had tried to seize on some Republican sentiment not to give Junge a third shot at a swing district and had some resources but could not compete with the $2 million Junge spent on advertising.

The National Republican Congressional Committee voiced support for Junge quickly after he declared victory.

"Congratulations to Paul Junge on his primary election victory. As a job creator and criminal prosecutor, Junge has a proven ability to deliver results and fight for Mid-Michiganders," NRCC spokesman Mike Marinella said. "Kristen McDonald Rivet is a self-serving, partisan politician who will trade the best interests of her constituents for her extreme far left agenda."

Close GOP primary in MI-03 ends in Hudson victory

Incumbent U.S. Rep. Hillary Scholten (D-Grand Rapids) will face Paul Hudson of East Grand Rapids in the 3rd U.S. House District in November, after Hudson emerged victorious from what ended up being the most nail-biting primary of Tuesday night.

Scholten cruised to a victory over her primary challenger, Salim Al-Shatel, with 90 percent of the vote to Al-Shatel's 9 percent. After hours of back-and-forth between Hudson and other Republican candidate Michael Markey, Hudson won with 55 percent of the vote with 100 percent of the vote reported.

Marlinga-James rematch set in MI-10

The 10th U.S. House District will see a rematch between Carl Marlinga and U.S. Rep. John James come November, after Marlinga beat out three other Democrats to win his party's nomination Tuesday night.

Marlinga declared victory just before midnight, thanking those who worked on his primary campaign and the voters in the 10th District for giving him a second opportunity to take on James, who he lost to in 2022.

"I am deeply honored by the trust and confidence the voters have placed in me. This victory belongs to all of us who believe in a future where every Michigander has the opportunity to thrive," Marlinga said in a statement. "We have a lot of work to do, and I am ready to roll up my sleeves and get to it. I invite everyone in MI-10 to join our movement and help us create the change we want to see in our district and our nation."

With 70 percent of the precincts reporting, Marlinga won 47 percent of the vote, followed by his primary competitors Diane Young, with 26.5 percent, Emily Busch, with 14 percent of the vote, and State Board of Education member Tiffany Tilley with 13 percent.

Other noteworthy results included the 1st U.S. House District's Democratic primary, where newcomer Callie Barr, of Traverse City, defeated Bob Lorinser of Marquette, who ran unsuccessfully for the seat in 2022. Barr, who won 58 percent of the vote, will face U.S. Rep. Jack Bergman (R-Watersmeet), a secure incumbent. Bergman crushed his primary opponent and is a huge favorite in November.

In the 4th District, U.S. Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Zeeland) easily defeated his primary challenger, Brendan Muir. His general election opponent, Democrat Jessica Swartz of Kalamazoo, was unopposed in her primary.

U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens (D-Birmingham) won her primary against Ahmed Ghanim of Ferndale with 87 percent of the vote.

120 W. Ottawa St., Lansing, MI 48933

P 517.482.9299 | F 517.484.4463 | mcalvey.com