

INSIDE MICHIGAN POLITICS

Inside: Early Peek at 2010 Candidates
Losing Congressional Representation
He Said It

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CAMPAIGN 2010: 'THE BEST YEAR OF OUR LIVES' THE SECOND TIME AROUND

The first such year was 2002.

All Michigan's psephologists and political junkies knew that the 2002 elections (primary and general) promised excitement and uncertainty unparalleled in state history — and they weren't disappointed.

2010 will offer more of the same.

True, the presidency and U.S. Senate won't be on the Nov. 2, 2010, general election ballot. Neither, with few exceptions (a couple of them especially noteworthy — see below), will countywide and township elected offices.

But everything else is up for grabs — and in a context that is unprecedented. Never before have races for the state's four constitutional offices, the entire U.S. House delegation, both the state House and Senate, and two seats on the state Supreme Court appeared on the same broadsheet on the eve of a census and reapportionment while term limits is in full sway. Moreover:

- The governorship will be open for only the third time in half a century.

- The four constitutional offices — Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State — will be open simultaneously for only the second time since 1946, the year after World War II ended.

- Democrats in the state's U.S. House delegation will be trying for their first back-to-back "majority status" victories over Republicans in the 21st Century (following last year's election results, Dems now hold an 8-7 edge).

- More than five dozen state legislators will be jettisoned at the end of 2010 by term limits. Add a few more who will pass up certain re-election for a chance at winning higher office. Result? Nearly half of the 148-member Legislature currently serving could be gone from office by 2011, replaced by the largest infusion of rookie lawmakers since the Depression.

- Control of the Supreme Court again hangs in the balance. Democrats could easily regain a majority of the justices for the first time since 1998 by winning just one of the two seats that will be up for grabs in 2010. Conversely, Republicans, who languished in the minority for most of four decades until 1998, hope to extend their longest string of years in the ascendancy since the mid-'50s (even though their current "majority" is problematic, to say the least).

- If Wayne Co. Executive **Bob Ficano** should decide to give up that job for a crack at the Democratic nomination for governor, his post as the top politician in the state's largest jurisdiction will be open for only the second time in two dozen years. And if the position of Macomb



Cherry

Co. Executive is created by a charter commission and approved by voters, Michigan's third largest enclave will feature a battle royal for what will surely be one of the most powerful local offices anywhere in the state.

- Let's not forget, either, the issue of whether Michigan should hold another Constitutional Convention. That question must be put to the state's voters every 16 years, and 2010 is the year it will automatically next appear on the ballot. The only other two times it's been subject to a public vote previously were in 1978 and 1994. Even though voters said "No" on both occasions, a question that would have accomplished a substantial re-write of Michigan's basic document narrowly failed to qualify for the ballot last year; if it had, polls showed that voters were poised to approve it.

2010 may seem a long way away, but here's how things look now:

Governor. Because Gov. **Jennifer Granholm** is term-limited, the governorship will be open for only the fourth time since just after the end of World War II. Given the increasing strength of the Michigan Democratic Party over the past half-decade and the woebegone status of the state's GOP, it may be surprising to some that the Republicans appear to have a longer and deeper bench of potential nominees than do the Dems. The one Democrat who clearly is running is Lt. Gov. **John Cherry** of Clio, who told *Detroit Free Press* editor **Ron Dzwonkowski** two weeks ago: "I'm in." Will Cherry have any competition for his party's nomination? It's hard to believe that he won't, if only because he's never been elected to anything outside of a suburban Genesee Co. state senate district without being joined at the hip with Granholm — and his allegiance to the current governor may well work against him in 2010. Yet most of the other names mentioned as possible Democratic aspirants are underwhelming if not laughable — former MSU football coach/athletic director **George Perles**; the governor's husband, **Daniel Mulhern**; and Flint Mayor **Don Williamson**, for example. Former Detroit Mayor **Dennis Archer** has already taken his name out of consideration, and Genesee Co. Treasurer **Dan Kildee** has said he won't run if Cherry does. Others that might be plausible candidates aren't likely to give up what they have to chase the brass ring, i.e. **Mike Duggan**, CEO of the Detroit Medical Center; Wayne Co. Executive **Bob Ficano**; Macomb Co. Sheriff **Mark Hackel**, who is more likely to seek election as Macomb Co. Executive if that office is on the ballot in 2010; and U.S. Rep. **Bart Stupak** (D-MI 1). The one uncertainty is **Andy Dillon** (D-Redford), Speaker of the



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state House of Representatives, a policy wonk with some Lincolnesque charisma. The term-limited Dillon has some fervent supporters, many of them his fellow state lawmakers — for example, state Reps. **George Cushingberry** (D-Detroit) and **Robert Jones** (D-Grand Rapids) hosted a private reception for Dillon at Washington's Willard Hotel two days before President **Barack Obama's** inauguration, paid for by a host of lobbying interests, including BOSCH, Jackson National Life Insurance, and Muchmore Harrington Smalley, with a little help from "Platinum Sponsor" **Ronda Stryker**. For the moment, Dillon claims he's "not even thinking" about running for Guv what with all the legislative challenges he has on his plate over the next 18 months. Republicans? Only one seems likely to make the run for sure — Attorney General **Mike Cox**, who's got an exploratory committee up and running and is already raising money. Almost as likely is U.S. Rep. **Pete Hoekstra** (R-MI 2); he's announced he won't seek a 10th term in Congress and is making all the usual preparations for a goober fling. The list of GOP contenders could double or triple, though, by the end of next month — that's when Secretary of State **Terri Lynn Land** and U.S. Rep. **Mike Rogers** (R-MI 8) say they'll announce whether they're taking the plunge. A surprise possible entry might be Oakland Co. Executive **L. Brooks Patterson**, arguably the most popular politician in the state's second-largest (and richest) county; he would be an instant major threat to win both a Republican primary and the general election. Other GOP possibilities fall in the same category as some of the Democratic aspirants — they'd be potentially strong contenders but for various reasons seem unlikely to make the race, i.e., Oakland Co. Sheriff **Mike Bouchard** (he and Patterson would damage each other in a primary); term-limited Senate Majority leader **Mike Bishop** of Rochester (ditto); and U.S. Rep. **Candice Miller** (R-MI 10), who knocked off **Dick Austin** for Secretary of State 14 years ago, who set a modern record for vote-getting by a Republican candidate for major statewide office when she won re-election in 1998, and who was the leading GOP Congressional vote-getter last year. However, Miller said late last year, before **Dick DeVos** took his name out of consideration, that she won't run for governor in 2010. Also on this list must be Domino's pizza CEO **David Brandon**, a former U-M Regent who, like Miller, has been Hamlet-like over the years in his irresolution about whether to seek higher office. How about a wild card? **Tim McBride**, 51, a former honcho in the U.S. Commerce Dept. and personal aide to President **George H.W. Bush** (McBride's wife, **Anita**, just left the White House, where she was chief of staff for Bush 41's daughter-in-law, First Lady **Laura Bush**), is actively exploring a return to Michigan to take a crack at the Big Prize. An Eastern Michigan University grad from Wayne, McBride has lived in Washington, D.C., for more than two decades, but he has ties to many elements of the Michigan GOP establishment, including former governors **John Engler** and **Bill Milliken**. This could get interesting.

Lieutenant Governor. The safest bet is whom it won't be — one-time Lt. Gov. **Dick Posthumus**, even though he could serve another term. And after eight years of Granholm/Cherry, it won't be Cherry/Granholm, either. Seriously, once the two major parties' nominees for governor are determined in next year's Aug. 3 primary,

any of a number of prospects could qualify, depending on the gender and geographical base of the goober nominees, as well as other factors. The only time in recent Michigan political history that a specific LG nominee has been designated by any non-incumbent prior to the primary was when then-U.S. Rep. **David Bonior** (D-Mt. Clemens) named then-state Senator **Alma Wheeler Smith** (D-S. Lyon) as his runningmate in 2002, but the tandem lost the Dem nomination battle to Granholm. Fact is, this office, which was always nominated by primary and elected independently of the governor until the present constitution took effect in 1964, has now become an 11th hour choice of gubernatorial nominees at state party conventions around Labor Day of election years. The process mirrors almost exactly the selection of a vice-president at the national level, except that it comes even later in the cycle and the nominee is usually even less well-known in Michigan than, say, **Dick Cheney** or **Joe Biden**.

Attorney General. It's hard to know who's serious about this important office except **Bill Schuette** (R-Midland), who gave up a safe seat on the state's appellate bench at the end of last year just so he could make a run for A.G. The only other Republican to take a specific step toward running is state Senator **Bruce Patterson** (R-Canton), who says he's formed an exploratory committee to pursue the possibility. Many wonder, however, whether that's more to irritate Senate Majority Leader **Mike Bishop** (R-Rochester), who is also thought to be harboring ambitions about being A.G. but who has a testy relationship with Patterson. Another name mentioned is Assistant U.S. Attorney **Matthew Schneider**, but it's hard to imagine he'd be a serious contender at a state party convention (where the nomination will be won) against someone like Schuette, who has three decades of experience counting delegate noses as a presidential campaign aide, Congressman, Agricultural Dept. director, and state senator. On the Democratic side, the only name bruited about is state Senator **Gretchen Whitmer** (D-E. Lansing), but she has a decision to make: does she give up on plans to file for a second term in the senate (she's not term-limited) when she hasn't yet secured the nomination for AG, which will be conferred more than three months later? More likely, she'll file, win her party's nomination in the 23rd senate district in the 8/3/10 primary, and drop it if and when she wins the A.G. nomination later that month [Ingham Co. Dems would then have to assemble in convention to pick a replacement nominee, probably one of two state reps: either **Barb Byrum** (D-Onondaga) or **Mark Meadows** (D-E. Lansing)].

Secretary of State. Three Republicans, two of them term-limited state senators, are off and running for this office, which is second in the line of succession to the governorship. Senator **Cameron Brown** (R-Fawn River Twp) is expected to make a formal announcement Feb. 12; his colleague, **Michelle McManus** (R-Lake Leelanau), is also in the hunt. So, too, is Calhoun Co. Clerk **Anne Norlander**, although she's run for this and other offices before without staying the course. No Democrats have evinced as much interest in SoS, but, at this point, why should they? Whoever gets her or his party's nod will depend on ticket-balancing machinations at each party's convention in Fall 2010. After all, in 2002, Republicans settled a battle between then-state Senator **Loren**

Bennett (R-Canton) and Kent Co. Clerk **Terri Lynn Land** for the SoS nod by making Bennett **Dick Posthumus's** runningmate and handing Land the SoS prize. Posthumus/Bennett went down to defeat, but Land racked up an impressive November victory over Democrat **Melvin "Butch" Hollowell**, a Granholm pal who himself had been part of a Dem convention ticket-balancing deal.

Congress. After a half-dozen years of holding a majority of Michigan's U.S. House delegation, the state's Republican MCs are back where they were during the 28 years before 2002 — in the minority. Democrats now hold an 8-7 edge following breakthrough wins in the 7th and 9th districts in the general election two months ago. Barring unforeseen developments — like a **Bart Stupak** giving up his seat or a magical GOP candidate who can actually win an election in Oakland Co. or Battle Creek/Jackson — it's unlikely the GOP can change that division next year. In fact, the Republicans may have trouble holding onto the 11th CD if Democrats can come up with a quality candidate against incumbent **Thaddeus McCotter** (R-MI 11). Fact is, 2012 — when we find out what Michigan's 14 districts will look like after reapportionment (yes, we'll lose one) — should be a more interesting election, at least for Congress, than 2010.

State Senate. Back in 2002, Senate Democrats — Lansing's longest-serving minority (then 18 years and counting) — thought they were armed with an unexpectedly favorable map drawn up by generous legislative Republicans and could finally recapture control of the south side of the capitol. It didn't happen. 2002 turned out to be a sub-par Democratic year (notwithstanding **Jennifer Granholm's** gubernatorial victory at the top of the ticket), so, while Dems netted one seat, they still found themselves in a 22-16 hole. They picked up another in 2006, so now the GOP's margin is only 21-17 going into 2010 (barring a possible Republican win if a special election is called between now and then in the vacant 19th district). But there will be 29 or 30 open seats in the Senate next year because of term limits, most of them now held by Republicans, several of them in marginal districts that Dems could win. Moreover, at least three Republican incumbents are also vulnerable. The battle for control of the Senate will be one of the top priorities of both major parties, rivaling the governorship in importance.

State House of Representatives. The vaunted post-2000 census gerrymander drawn up by Republicans that was supposed to ensure GOP control of the chamber for the entire decade was squandered in the short space of four years. Republicans lost control in 2006 and fell into a 67-43 hole in last November's voting — the third-weakest minority the GOP has ever had in the chamber since the party was created more than a century and a half ago. Republicans may not be able to regain any of those lost seats in 2010, either — Democrats have at least an even chance of adding to their majority in 2010. *Bottom line:* the House will not be the battleground it has been in the past, because the Democrats are on cruise control and the GOP will be hard-pressed to draw strong candidates and campaign cash in a year when there are so many more races where victory can make a real difference in what happens after the census and reapportionment in 2011-12.

Supreme Court. After a hiatus of eight years in which the cost and ferocity of contests for the high bench did not escalate from its hitherto record-high \$16.2 million in 2000, last year's fracas between Chief Justice **Cliff Taylor** and Democratic challenger **Diane Hathaway** turned out to be the most expensive Supreme Court race, per candidate, in Michigan history. 2010 will be a repeat of 2008, because two seats on the state's highest panel will be up for grabs. Interestingly, the same two incumbent Republican justices — **Robert P. Young, Jr.**, and **Elizabeth (Betty) Weaver** — may be trying to defend their seats as in 2002, when the Democrats didn't come close to knocking off either one of them. So why should things be any different next year? Because either Young or Weaver, or both, may choose not to run again, thus creating open seats, and because Dems smell blood in the water now that they've ousted Taylor and are in only a 4-3 minority, as opposed to the 5-2 hole they found themselves in back in 2002. The GOP must hold onto both the incumbents' seats to maintain control of the court headed into the rancorous reapportionment battles of 2011-12. A single Democratic nominee could finish as the runnerup (all the candidates will run in a pack) and regain control of the court for his or her party for the first time in a dozen years. Should Democrats win both seats, it would give their party an insurmountable 5-2 majority, destroying for the foreseeable future everything then-Gov. **John Engler** created in the late 1990s with his appointments creating the monolithic conservative 'Gang of Four.' There will be scads of other judicial races on the ballot, too: some 250 races for the state Court of Appeals + circuit, district and probate judgeships.

State Board of Education. Democrats dominate this panel, by 6-2. Each party has a seat to protect in 2010 — those of **Carolyn Curtin**, an Ewart Republican, and **Elizabeth Bauer**, a Democrat from Birmingham. If Curtin and Bauer or their replacement nominees both win, the partisan split stays the same, 6-2. If Curtin loses and the Democrats hold onto the Bauer seat, their majority balloons to 7-1. If Republicans win both seats, they'll whittle the Dems' edge down to 5-3.

U-M Board of Regents. Democrats, who already control the board, 6-2, have nothing to lose in 2010 balloting, because both seats up next year are held by Republicans — **Andrea Fischer Newman** of Detroit and **Andrew Richner** of Grosse Pointe Park. If either Newman or Richner, or their replacement nominee(s), loses, or both, the GOP will fall into either a 7-1 deficit, or 8-0 oblivion. Even if both win, the Republicans will still be in the same 6-2 minority.

MSU Board of Trustees. Democrats dominate this panel, too — by 6-2, the party's largest majority in a quarter-century. Each party has one seat up in 2010 — cable TV executive **Colleen McNamara** (D) of Lansing, daughter of the legendary Wayne Co. Executive **Ed**, and cherry grower **Donald Nugent** (R) of Frankfort. So if the Republicans can score a sweep, they'll reduce the Dems' advantage to 5-3. If the Democrats sweep, their majority surges to the biggest in more than four decades, 7-1. If the two parties split, things stay 6-2.

Wayne State U. Board of Governors. This is the

panel where the Republicans are in their deepest hole — a 7-1 deficit. But the situation for WSU in 2010 most closely resembles MSU and the SBE — each party has one seat to protect. The Republican is twice-elected **Diane Dunaskiss**, wife of a former state lawmaker from Lake Orion; the Democrat is **Richard "Son of Sam" Bernstein** of Farmington Hills, who is legally blind. If each wins, the 6-2 Democratic edge stays intact. If Dunaskiss wins a third eight-year term and Bernstein (or his replacement) loses, the Republicans whittle their deficit down to 6-2, but if Bernstein wins and Dunaskiss loses, the Dem margin of control will grow to a margin not seen since the first election after the present Constitution was adopted in 1963 — an 8-0 whitewash.

Co. Boards of Commissioners. All 699 county commissioners, spread throughout the state's 83 counties, will be up for grabs again next year. Democrats have net-gained seats in three straight elections — the first time they have ever done so. Republicans currently control 46 panels, Democrats 36, and there is a tie in tiny Keweenaw Co. Some 54.5% of all board members affiliate with the GOP, while 44.9% were elected as Democrats, but that's a big change from the 64.5%-34.9% edge the GOP enjoyed as recently as 2005-06. After 2010, all 83 boards will be reapportioned based on next year's census, and there may well not be 699 county lawmakers anymore since some counties cut the number of their commissioners while others increase the size of their boards. For example, there were 694 county commissioners between 1992 and 2002, but before that the number was almost always well above 700.

NEW POPULATION ESTIMATES CONFIRM MICHIGAN ON TRACK TO LOSE ANOTHER U.S. HOUSE SEAT IN 2010.

All during the current decade, it's been a near-certainty that Michigan's Congressional delegation would shrink by one following the 2010 census — but it hasn't been "official."

It still isn't, but it appears 2008 was the year that made chances we'll be able to keep our 15th U.S. House seat virtually non-existent.

New U.S. Census Bureau population estimates crunched by Kimball Brace, president of Election Data Services, Inc., in the nation's capital at year's end show that, through mid-2007, Michigan was hanging onto its 15th seat by the hair of its chinny-chin-chin — our 15th seat would be the 433rd allotted in the next apportionment out of a total of 435, but we were only 29,974 people away from losing it to another state, probably Texas or Florida.

Then, three weeks ago, came news that we were one of only two states in 2008 to actually lose population (Rhode Island was the other). Worse, we're estimated to have lost more than 47,000 citizens (more than any other state) last year — that drops us down to 436th or lower. Since membership in the U.S. House is capped at 435, and since we're on a downward trajectory that indicates we're going to lose still more population in the next couple of years, our U.S. House delegation is doomed to shrink from 15 to 14 after the 2010 census.

Even worse, Michigan is on a path to lose still another seat, maybe two, following the 2020 census. Some 70 years ago, we peaked as the seventh biggest state, and

we're still eighth largest (barely), but by 2020 or 2030 we'll be down to 13th or 14th if present trends continue. That translates into only a dozen U.S. House members — about what Georgia or Virginia or North Carolina have today (those three southern states are all likely to pass us in population and Congressional representation in the next decade or two).

Contrast that with the 19 members Michigan had in its U.S. House contingent between 1962 and '82, which was our zenith; or the 18 we had between 1982 and '92; or the 16 we had in the 1992-2002 decade; or the 15 we have today.

What would Michigan have to do to stop the hemorrhaging and reverse course? We'd have to gain a whopping 688,276 people in the next year — and that ain't gonna happen.

Ironically, Brace opines that the severe downturn in the housing market and the recession have dramatically lowered the mobility of most Americans, potentially limiting the type of further outflow to the Sunbelt that one might expect.

What states have been the biggest winners so far? Six states — Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada and Utah — each would gain a seat and Texas would gain a pair if the U.S. House was reapportioned today based on population estimates as of July 1, 2007. Brace's future population projections add to the list of states likely to gain Congressional seats based on the 2007 estimates — Texas is actually likely to garner two more (for a total of +4 by the time the 2010 census takes place); Arizona another one (for a total of +2 in 2010); and Oregon a sixth seat (an all-time high — it now has five). Florida also may gain a second additional seat, and North and South Carolina may gain one seat apiece.

If misery loves company, which states are likely to suffer along with Michigan by losing representation after 2010? Iowa, Louisiana (think Hurricane Katrina), Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania all appear certain to lose a seat apiece, and it could be even worse for New York and Ohio because Brace projects that both of those states are likely to lose a second seat as well. Besides Michigan, Illinois and New Jersey are on course to lose one seat each.

Interestingly, in one of Brace's projection models, it appears possible that the nation's largest state, California, could actually lose a seat (dropping from 54 to 53) — the first time it has ever shown a loss in Congressional representation since it gained statehood more than 150 years ago.

HE SAID IT

■ "(TV ads that focus on public safety are) the ones that resonate with voters. They tend to be the ones that are readily understandable to the electorate ... Frankly, judges who tend to be more liberal on crime are going to be more activist (against) business issues. That's just the way it goes ... You run on the social issues and rule on the economic issues." — **Dan Pero**, president of the American Justice Partnership, explaining to journalist **Chris Andrews** why AJP and other business-oriented PACs campaign against so-called "liberal" or "activist" judges or judicial candidates with ads focussed not on business or economic issues but on crime or other social/cultural characteristics of the rival candidates they're trying to defeat (1/5/09).