

INSIDE MICHIGAN POLITICS

Inside: Campaign 2008 --- Who Won?
U.S. & State House Winners
They Said It

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SHADES OF 1964 & WATERGATE: DEMOCRATS SWEEP THE BOARD, DESTROY ENGLER'S 'GANG OF FOUR'

It's hard to overestimate the damage done to the Michigan Republican Party by resurgent Democrats in last week's general election. By almost any standard, the state GOP now finds itself in arguably the worst shape it has ever been in since the party was founded in the middle of the 19th century:

■ Democrats possess the governorship and both U.S. Senators plus, now, a majority of the state's Congressional delegation.

■ Democrats now hold more seats in the state House of Representatives (67) than at any time in the entire history of their party in Michigan since before the Civil War except for a brief, 70-40, majority they held in the 80th Legislature three decades ago.

■ Democrats are poised to regain control of the state Senate in 2010 for the first time in 27 years when 17 seats now held by Republicans will be open because of term limits, and three of the four GOP incumbents seeking re-election will be vulnerable because they'll be running in marginal districts.

■ Democrats dominate all the education boards elected on a statewide basis by their largest majorities in more than four decades — the U-M Board of Regents, MSU Board of Trustees, and the state Board of Education, by 6-2, and the WSU Board of Governors by 7-1.

■ The seemingly shatter-proof lock on the Supreme Court by the 'Gang of Four' conservative Republican justices has been unexpectedly broken with the toppling of Chief Justice **Cliff Taylor** — the only head of the court to be ousted under the current Constitution. Taylor's humiliating defeat, by a whopping 369,820 votes at the hands of a relatively unknown, undistinguished Democratic nominee selected little more than two months ago, means that the new, tenuous 4-3 Republican court majority depends on the cooperation of the fiercely independent **Elizabeth (Betty) Weaver**, who has feuded publicly and privately with her GOP colleagues during the past decade. However, even if Weaver should suddenly become amenable to coalescing with her three Republican benchmates, the 2010 election looms ominously for the GOP. Two seats will be up: Weaver's and that of **Robert P. Young, Jr.** Weaver will still be young enough (69) to run again if she wants to, although, three years ago, she threatened to resign. If she's changed her mind about continuing on indefinitely, she'll be on the ballot with the incumbency designation, which was supposed to mean something

until this year. Young, too, will be on the same ballot with the same designation — if he hasn't resigned first or opted not to run for re-election. *Bottom line:* all the 2010 candidates will run in a "pack" — meaning that one Democratic nominee has only to finish second in the multi-candidate field for the Dems to regain 4-3 majority control of the high bench. In fact, the Democrats might enhance their chances by nominating only one candidate instead of the two to which they would be entitled. Meanwhile, the 2010 census looms and, after it, the 2011-2012 reapportionment. The GOP has always depended on a 'Gang of Four' court majority blocking any Democratic gerrymander cooked up by a Democrat-controlled legislature and Democratic governor that would be appealed to the courts. Guess what? That Republican hope is halfway to extinction based on the scenario sketched out above.

■ In Oakland County, Republicans dodged one bullet by retaining narrow control over the board of commissioners, but their ecstasy may be shortlived. Lost in the shuffle — and almost entirely unreported by the mainstream media — is the fact that Democrats won not only the prosecutor's office but also the seemingly obscure post of county treasurer (with term-limited state Rep. **Andy Meisner** of Ferndale). Apportionment of county boards following decennial censuses consists of a five-member committee now dominated by — guess who? — the Democrats. Count on Meisner, Prosecuting Attorney **Jessica Cooper** and Oakland Co. Democratic Chairman **David Woodward** combining to gerrymander board districts for the 2012-2022 decade. After that, the GOP may well be on the outside looking in for a long time.

■ The Republicans still have the incumbent Attorney General and Secretary of State, true, but both **Mike Cox** and **Terri Lynn Land** are term-limited. Both offices will be open in 2010. Former Congressman/state Senator/Appellate Judge **Bill Schuette** is poised to snare the GOP nomination for AG, and a host of lesser lights are lining up for a crack at SoS, but Michigan is looking increasingly like New Jersey — a state that had some prominent elected Republicans in the not-too-distant past but is now irretrievably "blue." Fact is, anybody Democrats nominate for any of the top statewide offices in 2010 has got to be considered the favorite, no matter who s/he are.

■ The Michigan GOP has no obvious leader waiting in the wings to pick up the pieces and move forward. Current party chair **Saul Anuzis** appears to be on the way out, and his most likely replacement will apparently come from the ranks of flackery and out-of-work politicians.

Back to the House GOP: to comprehend its ineptitude in failing to take advantage of the reapportionment map it drew for itself in the summer of 2001, here's a reminder of some recent Michigan political history:

● The 2000 general election had produced a Republican majority in the state House which combined with a majority GOP Senate and a Republican governor, **John Engler**, to draft the first Republican-tilted gerrymander of Congressional and legislative districts in three-quarters of a century.

● That plan, approved in 2001, should have yielded, on paper, at least 67 seats for the House GOP in the 2002 election, all things being equal. But Republicans didn't do as well as they should have — they came away from '02 with only 63 seats. While that represented the high water mark for Michigan Republicans since the early years of the Eisenhower administration, it should have been higher, particularly to provide a buffer against what was to follow.

● In 2004, then-Speaker **Rick Johnson** (R-LeRoy), found himself in a similar position to that of his predecessor, **Chuck Perricone**, in 2000. Each was term-limited and wasn't running for anything else. The biggest challenge to both men was whether each built up — or at least held onto — the majority each had inherited. Clearly, Perricone succeeded, whereas Johnson's House GOP lost a net five seats in 2004, reducing the GOP majority to 58-52 — right back where it was when Perricone was Speaker. In other words, the Johnson-led Republicans, with a much better map than Perricone had (and with **George W. Bush** doing better against **John Kerry** than he had against **Al Gore** in 2000), frittered away their electoral patrimony in the short space of two elections.

● Then came 2006, when the Speaker was 36-year-old **Craig DeRoche** (R- Novi), who like Johnson had been elected to the top leadership spot after only a single term in the House. DeRoche seemingly had one advantage that Johnson didn't possess — it was a comparatively 'light turnover' year, and there appeared to be only one seat — the 75th in Grand Rapids — that looked like it could flip from Republican to Democratic. Beyond that, Democrats would have to knock off incumbents to make gains — and that appeared almost impossible to do in Michigan, i.e., only three incumbents had been defeated in a general election in the previous decade out of more than 500 legislative races. Indeed, even minority Democrats didn't think they had a real chance of recapturing the majority — they were aiming for 2008. Amazingly, however, the Dems toppled three GOP incumbents in that single 2006 election

and annexed three open seats that had been held in the previous session by Republicans. Result? A 58-52 Democratic majority, making DeRoche the first Speaker in nearly four decades to lose his job after a single term as the result of an election.

● Finally, 2008: no Republican incumbent lost last week, but the party also failed to defeat any sitting Democrat despite what were supposed to be disastrous votes to hike taxes last year. Meanwhile, Democrats picked up nine open seats vacated by term-limited Republicans. The House GOP was outspent collectively by its Democratic rivals by at least 3-1, principally with money from Kalamazoo billionaire **Jon Stryker's** PAC. House Republicans were badly hurt by their inability to get funding from the party's key interest groups when it counted because of the unpopularity of DeRoche, generally regarded as the caucus's worst party leader since World War II. Needless to say, apologists for the House GOP will use this fall's Wall Street collapse and **John McCain's** clumsy "pull-out" from Michigan as the principal excuses for their 11/4 flame-out. Fact is, they would have been zapped, anyway — the only debate might be over the margin.

If there is a silver lining for House Republicans, it's only that their new caucus will be more 'diversified' than ever — with the first two African-Americans (**Larry DeShazor** of Portage and **Paul Scott** of Grand Blanc) in more than a century and a higher percentage of female members (only one more woman, actually, but the caucus is much smaller). That's something to build on — plus, DeRoche will soon be gone. That makes the caucus's decision this week on who their new leadership will be that much more important. Probably their strongest prospect is savvy, even-tempered freshman **Brian Calley** (R-Portland), who last spring took on the thankless task of trying to limit the party's losses even though any such effort was already too late. In fact, Calley and his committee did amazingly well — the House GOP easily could have lost far more than nine seats.

LESSON OF 2008: VAUNTED 2001 GOP GERRYMANDERS HAVE OUTLIVED THEIR USEFULNESS

Conventional political wisdom has been that, of the three separate redistricting schemes concocted by the Michigan Republican Party back in 2001, the U.S. House map best served the party's interests, the state House map was a close runner-up — but the Senate apportionment was a dud. In fact, many psephologists predicted that it would cost the GOP its Senate majority, if not in 2002 then certainly in 2006.

As we near the end of the decade seven years later, the verdict on the accuracy of those prognostications has changed. Three separate scenarios seem to prevail:

■ **1)** The U.S. House map still has to be considered a master gerrymander, forcing U.S. Rep. **David Bonior** out of Congress, pitting two Democrats (**John Dingell** and **Lynn Rivers**) against one another, and transforming what had been a 9-7 D/R delegation into a 9-6 R/D lineup that stayed the same through three elections. Even after this year's results, the Dems now

ERRATA

In the "46 House Freshmen" insert enclosed with this issue, newly-elected state Rep. **Mike Huckleberry** (D-Greenville) is just that — a Democrat, not an "R." Also, the predecessor of incoming state Rep.-elect **Andy Neumann** (D-Alpena) is current Rep. **Matt Gillard**, who is also a "D" not an "R."

have only 53.3% of the 15-member Michigan delegation despite the fact that their candidates got a higher percentage than that of the aggregate vote statewide (see below).

■ **2)** The state Senate map, much vilified by Republican analysts when it was adopted as not being sufficiently "pro-GOP," has held up as well as or better than expected for the party that drew it up. In fact, it could be argued that the GOP held an artificially high number of seats (23) back in 2001 when reapportionment was addressed, and that the 21 Republicans the Senate has now is much more in line with what the party should expect, especially when the aggregate Democratic vote for the Senate in 2006 was some 9% better statewide than the GOP cumulative vote total.

■ **3)** The state House map, thought to be a guarantor of majority status for a decade, has come apart at the seams. On paper, it should have yielded 67 seats in the 2002 election; instead, the GOP got only 63. Then, in 2004, House Republicans suffered a net loss of five seats, and, two years ago, six. Added to the nine seats the GOP lost this year, that 20-seat hemorrhage is the second-worst three-election-cycle loss for the GOP since the party was founded "under the oaks" in Jackson in 1854, before the Civil War.

Of course, there could be another explanation for what happened to Republicans in the last three elections following the remap: the Senate GOP and Congressional Republicans simply know how to look after their own, know how to recruit candidates for open seats, and know how to win, period — while state House Republicans don't. In other words, the House map is as good as or better than the Senate and U.S. House maps, but state House Republicans have fielded poor candidates in open districts, weak and ineffective members who have trouble getting re-elected, and lousy strategy and leadership that dooms the party's nominees to failure at the polls. Most political observers have long since subscribed to this latter theory as the principal reason for the state House GOP's electoral collapse.

Or maybe Democrats are just getting better at everything — candidate recruitment, fund-raising, incumbency protection, you name it. Fact is, Democrats once again outperformed the Republicans from top to bottom in this year's election:

● Democrats received 2,518,585 votes in the state's 15 U.S. House districts (54.4% of the total for the two major parties, not counting splinter candidates), whereas the GOP got only 2,109,537 votes (45.6% of the total). *One caveat:* the GOP failed to field a nominee in the 14th district, which is heavily Democratic. That continued an amazing tradition: there have been only two elections in the past three decades — 1994 and 2004 — when the GOP has managed to win an aggregate majority of the popular vote for the U.S. House in Michigan when both major parties fielded candidates in every district (obviously the *caveat* cited above would have made no difference this year).

● Democrats received 2,428,227 votes in the state's 110 state House districts (again, 54.4% of the total for the two major parties, not counting splinter candidates), whereas the GOP got only 1,962,022

votes (again, 45.6% of the total), although the GOP failed to field nominees in 10 districts, all of them heavily Democratic. The Dems' aggregate vote total gave them 67 seats (60.9% of the 110-seat body), which is a little higher than what one would expect from the aggregate vote for all their candidates. It's also the opposite result from what Republicans should anticipate from an apportionment map they themselves drew up in the summer of 2001 — the House GOP should be winning a higher percentage of seats than their portion of the aggregate vote would seem to entitle them to.

Here are the final numbers, presented in a different way than you've seen them anywhere else:

**Michigan's U.S. House Winners
By 2008 General Election Percentages***
(Republicans in italics)

Democrats	Republicans
by 70%-100%	
John Conyers, Jr. (14/Detroit).....92.7%	
C.C. Kilpatrick (13/Detroit).....74.2	
Sander Levin (12/Southfield)72.1	
John Dingell (15/Dearborn).....70.6	
Dale Kildee (5/Flint)70.2	
by 60%-70%	
Bart Stupak (1/Menominee) 64.8%	<i>Candice Miller</i> (11/Harrison Twp) . 66.2%
	<i>Peter Hoekstra</i> (2/Holland) 62.3
	<i>Dave Camp</i> (4/Midland) 61.9
	<i>Vernon Ehlers</i> (3/Grand Rapids) .. 60.8
by 50%-60%	
Gary Peters (9/Blmfld Hills) 52.1%	<i>Fred Upton</i> (6/St. Joseph) 58.9%
Mark Schauer (7/Battle Creek) ... 48.7***	<i>Mike Rogers</i> (8/Brighton) 56.4
	<i>Thaddeus McCotter</i> (11/Livonia) 51.3

* *Winners' percentages of the total vote in each district include candidates of all parties. There was at least one minor party candidate in all 15 districts; their strength ranged from a low of .01% for a U.S. Taxpayers nominee in the 1st CD to a high of 4.4% for a Libertarian candidate in the 14th. Bottom line: if you throw out the votes for splinter party nominees in all enclaves, all the figures listed above for the winners would be slightly higher.*

Michigan House of Representatives
By 2008 General Election Percentages**
(Republicans in italics)

Blow-out Democratic (70%-100%)

Durhal (Detroit)	100.0%	Stanley (Flint)	82.0
Johnson (Highland Park) ..	100.0	Warren (Ann Arbor).....	78.3
Young (Detroit)	100.0	Bauer (Lansing)	77.9
Jackson (Detroit)	100.0	Polidori (Dearborn)	77.5
Gonzales (Flint Twp)	100.0	Clemente (Lincoln Park)	76.3
B.C. Scott (Detroit)	98.2	Constan (Dearborn Hgts)....	75.6
Nathan (Detroit)	96.9	Robt. Jones (Kalamazoo)....	73.8
Cushingberry (Detroit).....	96.7	Bennett (Muskegon)	73.6
Lemmons (Detroit)	96.2	R. Schmidt (Grand Rpd)....	71.3
Womack (Detroit)	95.8	Lipton (Huntington Wds)....	71.2
Leland (Detroit)	94.8	A. W. Smith (S. Lyon).....	71.2
Tlaib (Detroit)	89.8	Geiss (Taylor)	70.6
LeBlanc (Westland)	88.3	Liss (Warren)	70.5
Gregory (Southfield).....	87.6	Haugh (Roseville).....	70.5
Coulouris (Saginaw)	86.5	Slezak (Davison).....	70.5
Melton (Auburn Hls).....	83.7	Lahti (Hancock)	70.5

Heavily Democratic (60%-70%)

Mayes (Bay City).....	69.8%	T. Brown (Pigeon).....	64.8
Spade (Tipton).....	69.3	Espinoza (Croswell).....	64.5
Meadows (E. Lansing)	69.1	J. Switalski (Warren)	63.0
McDowell (Rudyard).....	68.9	Lindberg (Marquette).....	63.8
Hammel (Flushing).....	67.3	Simpson (Jackson).....	63.2
Sheltrown (West Branch)	66.6	Ebli (Monroe).....	63.0
Byrnes (Chelsea).....	66.4	Byrum (Onondaga).....	62.9
Miller (Mt. Clemens).....	66.2	Griffin (Jackson)	62.5
Dillon (Redford)	66.1	Segal (Battle Creek)	61.9
Angerer (Dundee)	66.0	Donigan (Royal Oak).....	61.8
Kandrevas (Southgate).....	65.7		

Comfortably Democratic (55%-60%)

Scripps (Northport).....	59.9%	Barnett (Farmngtn Hls)	57.9
Kennedy (Gibraltar).....	59.6	Bledsoe (Grosse Pointe).....	56.6
Corriveau (Northville)	59.2	Nerat (Wallace)	56.5
Dean (Grand Rapids).....	58.1		

Marginally Democratic (50%-55%)

Huckleberry (Greenville)	54.4%	L. Brown (W. Blmfld)	51.5
Valentine (Muskegon).....	53.6	Haase (Richmond)	49.5***
Neumann (Alpena).....	53.1	Roberts (St. Clair Shrs).....	49.4***
Slavens (Canton).....	51.7		

Marginally Republican (50%-55%)

Haines (Lake Angelus).....	49.3%***	Ball (Laingsburg).....	52.7
DeShazor (Portage).....	51.1	W. Schmidt (Traverse City) ..	53.3
Tyler (Niles).....	52.1	Caul (Mt. Pleasant).....	54.5
P. Scott (Grand Blanc).....	52.5		

Comfortably Republican (55%-60%)

Hansen (Hart)	55.7%	Horn (Frankenmuth)	57.9
Bolger (Marshall).....	56.6	J. Stamas (Midland).....	58.2
Proos (St. Joseph)	57.2	Rick Jones (Grand Ledge)....	58.2
Daley (Attica)	57.3	Denby (Fowlerville).....	58.9
McMillan (Rochester Hls)....	57.4	Pearce (Rockford)	58.9
Crawford (Novi).....	57.5	Walsh (Livonia)	59.2
Knollenberg (Troy)	57.8	Lori (Three Rivers).....	59.8
Opsommer (DeWitt).....	57.9	Moss (Birmingham).....	59.8

Heavily Republican (60%-70%)

Meltzer (Clinton Twp).....	60.0%	Schuitmaker (Lawton)	61.1
Rocca (Sterling Hgts)	60.1	Genetski (Saugatuck).....	61.7

Rogers (Brighton).....	60.2	Green (Wyoming).....	62.3
Marleau (Lake Orion)	60.4	Pavlov (St. Clair).....	64.2
Meekhof (W. Olive)	60.7	Calley (Portland)	64.2
Moore (Farwell).....	60.7	Hildenbrand (Lowell).....	64.5
Lund (Shelby Twp).....	60.7	Kowall (White Lake).....	66.6
Elsenheimer (Bellaire).....	60.7	Kurtz (Coldwater).....	66.8
Amash (Kentwood)	60.9	Booher (Ewart)	69.7

Blow-out Republican (70%-100%)

Agema (Grandville)	70.3%
Haveman (Holland).....	72.2

** *Everything printed above in the footnotes for Congress* also applies in races for the state House*

*** *Splinter party candidates caused winner's proportion of the total vote to dip below 50%*

HE SAID IT

■ "The same apportionment map can look a lot different over time. At first, it may look like a masterpiece, guaranteed to give the party that drew it up majority status in whatever chamber for the whole decade. Then, after an election or two, it seems to develop a little rust, and then maybe people notice that there are some real kinks in it that perhaps (should have been recognized when it was on the drafting board), and then, well, by 2010, everybody is saying, 'Wow! This thing is a real lemon!'" — **Mark Grebner**, president of Practical Political Consulting, at Pundit Summit IX, in the Library of Michigan auditorium, last Thursday, Nov. 6.

DID THE JUDICIAL WRITE-IN WIN?

Predictably, no — but he did amazingly well. In fact, East Tawas attorney **Chris Martin** set a record under the current Constitution for write-in votes in a judicial election. Martin garnered an impressive 11,326 write-ins on Nov. 4 in his bid to upset one of two incumbent judges in the 23rd Circuit, falling just 985 votes short of the second-place finisher, the despised **Ronald W. Bergeron** of Standish. Martin actually was the top vote-getter in his native Iosco Co. (the four-county enclave's largest), but he finished third behind the two sitting judges in Arenac (Bergeron's home county), Oscoda, and Alcona. Why wasn't Martin's name printed on the ballot? Because Bergeron challenged Martin's right to oppose him and extracted a boneheaded 4-3 decision from the state Supreme Court's 'Gang of Four' that allowed Bergeron to go unopposed. If there was any 'equity' in the 23rd on 11/4 it was that one of the Supremes' four-judge majority in the court's decision was none other than Chief Justice **Cliff Taylor**. When word spread in the 'Sunrise Coast' jurisdiction northeast of Bay City of Taylor's role in the court's cockamamie opinion, the chief justice was thrashed by voters at the polls by seven points, losing three of the four counties — one more reason Taylor went down in flames on Nov. 4.