

# INSIDE MICHIGAN POLITICS

Inside: State House Roll Call Votes

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## ROLL CALL ANALYSIS SHOWS STATE HOUSE DEMOCRATS STILL OVERWHELMINGLY 'LIBERAL,' BUT 'MICRO-POLLS' TELL US GOP WILL BE BLOWN OUT, ANYWAY

Democrats in the state House of Representatives during 2008 were not far off the record they set last year in voting along 'liberal' ideological lines.

In 2007, the Dems' composite average 'liberal' score on litmus test roll calls was a whopping 93.6%; this year, it was 87.1%.

So concludes **Inside Michigan Politics**, which has compiled a rating system that judges lawmakers' ideologies on a wide variety of issues.

But 'liberal' doesn't appear to be the scare word it's been in the past. In fact, 'liberal' Democrats are poised to pick up a bunch of seats in the state House on 11/4 and pad their current 58-52 majority, according to a quartet of 'micro-polls' commissioned by **IMP** and conducted by East Lansing-based Practical Political Consulting in four key House districts on Sept. 29, before GOP presidential nominee **John McCain's** "pullout" from Michigan, which can only hurt his party more.

The four districts are the 1st, 65th, 70th, and 91st. Two of those enclaves (the 1st and 70th) are open this year because of term limits; the other two feature incumbent Democrats seeking re-election.

*Bottom line:* in all four, the Democrats are well ahead, "but not so far that winning can be taken for granted," according to PPC. Conversely, the GOP nominee is behind, "but potentially within striking distance," says PPC. "If money is available, the situation may be salvageable but if the (Republicans) are going to be out-spent and out-campaigned, any money is likely to be wasted."

That's good news for incumbents **Mike Simpson** (D-Jackson) and **Mary Valentine** (D-Muskegon) and Democratic nominees **Tim Bledsoe** of Grosse Pointe and **Mike Huckleberry** of Greenville.

If those four Democrats all win, it's likely that their party will win an additional 8-10 seats as well, pushing the Democratic majority to an astounding 70-40.

As for the numerical scores listed below, they're probably irrelevant to what happens on 11/4, so deep is the disgust with the Republican 'brand' in Michigan and nationally. It could be 1974 or 1964 all over again.

In arriving at these roll call tallies, **IMP** used 100% as an example of a representative who voted the "liberal" position on 42 different roll calls on a variety of social, economic, taxation, environmental, civil rights,

and public health/safety issues. "0" represents a perfect conservative score. If a roll call was missed, it was simply thrown out. Under these ground rules, failure to vote on some issues caused a Representative's score to vary in percentage terms from what it would have been had s/he voted on all of them; each roll call was rated equally. This **IMP** profile is based on votes during the past 10 months, beginning with a roll call last November and ending with a vote just over three weeks ago:

■ 11/28/07, Roll Call #533 of 2007, HB 4680, prohibiting retailers from placing expiration dates on merchandise gift certificates or gift cards (Yes=Liberal, No=Conservative).

■ 12/1/07, #541, HB 5408, imposing a 21.99% surcharge on businesses subject to the Michigan Business Tax, and repealing the 6% tax on services (Y=L, N=C).

■ 12/4/07, #550, HB 5444, expanding the Michigan Housing Development Authority's ability to refinance home loans for low income citizens (Y=L, N=C).

■ 12/5/07, #557, HB 4163, banning smoking from private businesses such as restaurants (Y=L, N=C).

■ 12/12/07, #601, HB 4551, increasing penalties in animal abuse cases, despite complaints that penalties in the bill are tougher than for similar offenses against human beings (Y=L, N=C).

■ 12/12/07, #617, SB 410, replacing 29-cent phone tax on 911 emergency services with 19-cent tax on all telephone lines, both land line and cell phones (Y=L, N=C).

■ 12/12/07, #622, HB 4401, for purposes of granting workers compensation benefits, establishes a presumption for non-volunteer firefighters who have been on the job for at least five years that certain types of cancer they may incur have arisen out of and in the course of their employment (Y=L, N=C).

■ 12/12/08, #637, HB 5105, suspending for two years the mandated gradual reduction in Detroit's income tax (Y=L, N=C).

■ 12/13/07, #646, HB 5261, mandating that an employer must grant paid leave to an employee who adopts a child five years old or younger (Y=L, N=C).

■ 2/12/08, #21 of 2008, HB 4627, establishing a government commission on pay equity (Y=L, N=C).

■ 2/12/08, #29, SB 415, requiring the Dept. of Education to identify and place on its web site informa-

tion on the risks associated with human papillomavirus (HPV) and the availability, effectiveness, and potential risks of HPV vaccines, and encouraging public and private schools to make this information available to parents and students (Y=L, N=C).

■ 2/14/08, #59, HB 5341, mandating carbon monoxide detectors in new dwellings (Y=L, N=C).

■ 2/19/08, #63, HB 4092, requiring DNA sampling in arrests for violent felonies (Y=C, N=L).

■ 3/13/08, #176, HB 4151, prohibiting drivers under age 18 with a "Level 2" graduated driver's license from having more than one passenger in the car who is a minor unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, with certain narrow exceptions (Y=L, N=C).

■ 3/18/08, #182, SB 82, requiring child safety booster seats for children between 4- and 8-years old who are under 4'9" tall and weigh less than 80 pounds (Y=L, N=C).

■ 3/20/08, #222, Acciavatti amendment to HB 5811, requiring the State Police to post on a website all its expenditures during a fiscal year, and with the purpose of each (Y=C, N=L).

■ 3/20/08, #228, Knollenberg amendment to HB 5809, requiring the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to "work collaboratively" to ensure that no government housing or subsidies be provided for illegal aliens (Y=C, N=L).

■ 4/15/08, #268, HB 5559, allowing the state Insurance Commissioner to order a refund of an insurance premium paid by affected policyholders if it deems the company's rate filing to have been "excessive and unfairly discriminatory," and if the amount is substantial and equals or exceeds the cost of making the refund (Y=L, N=C).

■ 4/16/08, #273, HB 5206, extending the maximum allowable period between inspections by local building departments of multiple dwellings and rooming houses from once every three years to once every six years, unless there are complaints about violations, in which case the revised maximum period would be four years instead of the current two years (Y=C, N=L).

■ 4/22/08, #309, HB 5901, mandating that employers with at least 25 employees grant an employee who has been a crime victim up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to attend the trial of the defendant (Y=L, N=C).

■ 4/22/08, #311, HB 4625, prohibiting paying a person a wage or salary that is less than an amount established under an interpretation of "comparable worth" devised by a proposed commission composed of various special interests and advocacy groups. To do so would be a civil rights law violation (Y=L, N=C).

■ 5/14/08, #387, HB 6014, prohibiting anyone under age 14 from operating a personal watercraft, and providing that those age 14 or 15 can't, either, unless accompanied by a parent, guardian or an adult designated by the parent or guardian (Y=L, N=C).

■ 5/14/08, #388, HB 4444, increasing penalties for selling tobacco to minors from \$50 to \$100 for a first offense, \$250 for a second offense, and \$500 for a third offense within a year. If the sale is made over the Internet or by mail order, the fines would be \$500, \$1,000, and \$2,000 (Y=L, N=C).

■ 5/14/08, #391, HB 5072, lowering the threshold for requiring bottled water producers to get a state permit from 250,000 gallons per day to 200,000 gallons for pumping water sold outside the Great Lakes basin, and 100,000 if sold within the basin (Y=L, N=C).

■ 5/15/08, #392, HB 4532, prohibiting an employer with more than 50 workers from having a policy against employing an individual on the basis of certain conduct by the individual during non-working hours (Y=L, N=C).

■ 5/15/08, #394, HB 4887, banning employers from making employment decisions based on an employee's credit history, unless a good credit history is an established bona fide occupational requirement for a particular position (Y=L, N=C).

■ 5/20/08, #410, HB 5783, prohibiting a vendor from bidding on state contracts if it has knowingly hired illegal aliens or if the vendor has violated the state's "prevailing wage" law, which prohibits awarding contracts to contractors who submit the lowest bid unless the contractor pays so-called 'prevailing wages' based on union pay scale in a particular part of a geographic region, rather than market rates (Y=L, N=C).

■ 5/27/08, #442, SB 776, banning partial birth abortion (Y=C, N=L).

■ 6/4/08, #471, HB 4749, limiting the ability of a company that had acquired another company (which may have produced or sold asbestos in the past) to the asset value of the acquired company. In other words, the new owner could not be sued for damages that exceed the value of the assets of the acquired firm that had actually brought about the liability (Y=C, N=L).

■ 6/4/08, #477, HB 5364, creating a statewide arthritis awareness program (Y=L, N=C).

■ 6/4/08, #479, Moss amendment to SB 1096, imposing a 5% across-the-board cut in the amount proposed for the FY '09 Dept. of Education Dept. budget (Y=C, N=L).

■ 6/11/08, #504, HB 6003, requiring the Dept. of Labor and Economic Growth to create a model ordinance for the licensure of second-hand/junk product dealers (Y=L, N=C).

■ 6/11/08, #514, Agema amendment to SB 1099, prohibiting state universities from charging illegal aliens tuition that is below the non-resident rate (Y=C, N=L).

■ 6/18/08, #535, HB 4211, requiring that all state buildings and facilities open to the public have recycling receptacles for glass, plastic and aluminum beverage containers. Buildings leased by the state would also be subject to this requirement if the building can accommodate it, and so would future state leases (Y=L, N=C).

■ 6/18/08, #539, HB 5296, prohibiting a mortgage lender from making a "high cost" (subprime) home loan without ensuring that the borrower had received counseling from an approved nonprofit organization on the advisability of the loan. Also bars the lender from charging prepayment fees or penalties (Y=L, N=C).

■ 6/24/08, #562, HB 6102, requiring that a financial institution or agency that makes consumer loans must establish "reasonable policies and procedures" for detecting, preventing, or mitigating identity theft (Y=L, N=C).

■ 6/25/08, #573, HB 5651, requiring licensure and regulation of massage therapists, and imposing \$75 annual license fees. The bill would create a Michigan Board of Massage Therapy to establish licensure and competence assessment requirements for the practice of massage therapy, and would require 500 hours of training (Y=L, N=C).

■ 6/26/08, #601, HB 6112, mandating binding arbitration in labor negotiations between county corrections officers (jail guards) and their employers (Y=L, N=C).

■ 9/17/08, #741, HB 6261, mandating that nursing homes carry liability insurance covering the risks accruing from potential neglect of a patient, in the amount of at least \$500,000 per occurrence (Y=L, N=C).

■ 9/18/08, #743, HB 6130, banning retail sales of novelty lighters that are designed to appear to be toys, featuring flashing lights or making musical sounds (Y=L, N=C).

■ 9/18/08, #756, SB 213, imposing a 10% "renewable" energy mandate on electric utilities by 2015, including solar, biomass, wind, hydro, geothermal, advanced coal systems and more. The Public Service Commission would have the authority to suspend the mandate if it judges the extra cost on utilities to be too high, and utilities could not raise monthly bills more than \$3 for residential customers, \$16.58 for small businesses, and \$187.50 for larger firms (Y=L, N=C).

■ 9/18/08, #759, HB 6061, extending sunset on various taxes and fees that were set to expire 9/30/08 (Y=L, N=C).

The envelope, please:

**Steve Tobocman** (D-Detroit) ..... 100.0%  
(42 out of 42 roll calls) ..... **Most Liberal**

● **Joan Bauer** (D-Lansing) and  
**Rebekah Warren** (D-Ann Arbor) ..... 97.62%  
(41 of 42)

**Alma Wheeler Smith** (D-S. Lyon) ..... 97.56%  
(40 of 41, one missed)

● **Pam Byrnes** (D-Chelsea), **Morris Hood, III**  
(D-Detroit), **Gabe Leland** (D-Detroit), and  
**Coleman A. Young, II** (D-Detroit) ..... 95.2%  
(40 of 42)

**Aldo Vagnozzi** (D-Farmington Hills) ..... 94.7%

(36 of 38, four missed)

**LaMar Lemmons, Jr.** (D-Detroit) ..... 94.6%  
(35 of 37, five missed)

**George Cushingberry, Jr.** (D-Detroit) ..... 94.1%  
(32 of 34, eight missed)

● **Paul Condino** (D-Southfield), **Andy Coulouris**  
(D-Saginaw), **Steve Lindberg** (D-Marquette), and  
**Mark Meadows** (D-E. Lansing) ..... 92.9%  
(39 of 42)

**Bert Johnson** (D-Detroit) ..... 92.7%  
(38 of 41, one missed)

● **Kathleen Law** (D-Gibraltar) and  
**Bettie Cook Scott** (D-Detroit) ..... 92.50%  
(37 of 40, two missed)

**Brenda Clack (D-Flint)** ..... 91.7%  
(33 of 36, six missed)

● **Lee Gonzales** (D-Flint Twp) and  
**Andy Meisner** (D-Ferndale) ..... 90.2%  
(37 of 41, one missed)

● **Frank Accavitti** (D-Eastpointe) and  
**Matt Gillard** (D-Alpena) ..... 90.0%  
(36 of 40, two missed)

**Shanelle Jackson** (D-Detroit) ..... 89.5%  
(34 of 38, four missed)

● **Doug Bennett** (D-Muskegon),  
**Hoon-Yung Hopgood** (D-Taylor),  
and **Robert Jones** (D-Kalamazoo) ..... 88.1%  
(37 of 42)

**Marsha Cheeks** (D-Detroit) ..... 87.8%  
(36 of 41, one missed)

**Virgil Smith** (D-Detroit) ..... 86.5%  
32 of 37, five missed

● **Marie Donigan** (D-Royal Oak),  
**Richard Hammel** (R-Flushing), **Gary McDowell**  
(D-Rudyard), **Fred Miller** (D-Mt. Clemens),  
**Gino Polidori** (D-Dearborn), and  
**Mary Valentine** (D-Muskegon) ..... 85.7%  
(36 of 42)

● **John Espinoza** (D-Croswell), **Tim Melton**  
(D-Pontiac), and **Lisa Wojno** (D-Warren) ..... 85.4%  
(35 of 41, one missed)

**Barbara Farrah** (D-Southgate) ..... 85.0%  
34 of 40, two missed)

● **Kathy Angerer** (D-Dundee) and **Steve Bieda**  
(D-Warren) and **Richard LeBlanc** (D-Westland) .... 83.3%  
(35 of 42)

● **Ed Clemente** (D-Lincoln Park) and  
**Andy Dillon** (D-Redford) ..... 82.9%  
(34 of 41, one missed)

● **Marc Corriveau** (D-Northville),  
**Robert Dean** (Grand Rapids), **Ted Hammon** (D-Burton)  
and **Michael Sak** (Grand Rapids) ..... 81.0%

(34 of 42)  
 ● **Barb Byrum** (R-Onondaga), **Bob Constan** (D-Dearborn Heights), and **Kate Ebli** (D-Monroe) .. 80.5% (33 of 41, one missed)  
**Jeff Mayes** (D-Bay City) ..... 78.6% (33 of 42)  
 ● **Terry Brown** (D-Pigeon), **Dale Sheltroun** (D-West Branch), **Mike Simpson** (D-Jackson), and **Dudley Spade** (D-Tipton) ..... 76.2% (32 of 42)  
**Ed Gaffney** (Grosse Pointe Farms) ..... 75.0% (30 of 40, two missed)  
**Mike Lahti** (D-Hancock) ..... 73.8% (31 of 42)  
**Martin Griffin** (D-Jackson) ..... 73.7% (28 of 38, four missed)  
**Mike Nofs** (R-Battle Creek) ..... 62.5% (25 of 40, two missed)  
 ● **Tory Rocca** (R-Sterling Heights) and **Tonya Schuitmaker** (R-Lawton) ..... 61.9% (26 of 42)  
**Richard Ball** (R-Laingsburg) ..... 59.5% (22 of 37, five missed)  
**Lorence Wenke** (R-Richland) ..... 59.0% (23 of 39, three missed)  
**David Law** (R-Commerce Twp) ..... 57.5% (23 of 40, two missed)  
 ● **Goeff Hansen** (R-Hart) and **Tim Moore** (R-Farwell) ..... 57.1% (24 of 42)  
**David Palsrok** (R-Manistee) ..... 54.7% (23 of 42)  
**Phil LaJoy** (R-Canton) ..... 53.7% (22 of 41, one missed)  
**John Proos** (R-St. Joseph) ..... 52.4% (22 of 42)  
 ● **Brian Calley** (R-Portland) and **Rick Jones** (Grand Ledge) ..... 50.0% (21 of 42)  
**Tom Casperson** (R-Escanaba) ..... 48.7% (19 of 39, three missed)  
**John Stakoe** (R-Highland) ..... 47.6% (20 of 42)  
**Rick Shaffer** (R-Three Rivers) ..... 43.9% (18 of 41, one missed)  
 ● **Darwin Booher** (R-Evart), **Bill Caul** (R-Mt. Pleasant), **Kevin Green** (R-Wyoming), and **Ken Horn** (R-Frankenmuth) ..... 42.9% (18 of 42)  
 ● **Bruce Caswell** (R-Hillsdale), and **Dave Hildenbrand** (R-Lowell) ..... 40.5%

(17 of 42)  
**Chris Ward** (R-Brighton) ..... 40.0% (12 of 30, 12 missed)  
 ● **Dan Acciavatti** (R-New Baltimore) and **Judy Emmons** (R-Sheridan) ..... 39.5% (15 of 38, four missed)  
 ● **Tom Pearce** (R-Rockford) and **Dave Robertson** (R-Grand Blanc) ..... 39.0% (16 of 41, one missed)  
**Neal Nitz** (R-Baroda) ..... 38.1% (16 of 42)  
**Jim Marleau** (R-Lake Orion) ..... 35.7% (15 of 42)  
**Fran Amos** (R-Waterford) ..... 35.0% (14 of 40, two missed)  
**Jack Brandenburg** (R-Harrison Twp) ..... 33.3% (13 of 39, three missed)  
**Paul Opsommer** (R-DeWitt) ..... 32.5% (13 of 40, two missed)  
 ● **Kim Meltzer** (R-Clinton Twp) and **Howard Walker** (R-Traverse City) ..... 31.0% (13 of 42)  
 ● **Bill Huizenga** (R-Zeeland) and **Glenn Steil, Jr.** (R-Grand Rapids) ..... 30.8% (12 of 39, three missed)  
 ● **Joe Hune** (R-Fowlerville) and **Phil Pavlov** (R-St. Clair) ..... 28.6% (12 of 42)  
**John Stahl** (R-North Branch) ..... 26.8% (11 of 41, one missed)  
 ● **Marty Knollenberg** (R-Troy), **John Moolenaar** (R-Midland), and **Chuck Moss** (R-Birmingham) ..... 26.2% (11 of 42)  
**Arlan Meekhof** (R-Olive Twp) ..... 25.0% (10 of 40, two missed)  
**Kevin Elsenheimer** (R-Bellaire) ..... 23.8% (10 of 42)  
**Craig DeRoche** (R-Novi) ..... 17.1% (7 of 41, one missed)  
**John Pastor** (R-Livonia) ..... 12.5% (5 of 40, two missed)  
**John Garfield** (R-Rochester Hills) ..... 7.9% (3 of 38, four missed)  
**Jack Hoogendyk** (R-Kalamazoo) ..... 7.5% (3 of 40, two missed)  
**Fulton Sheen** (R-Plainwell) ..... 7.3% (3 of 41, one missed)  
**Dave Agema** (R-Grandville) ..... 2.4% (1 of 42)  
**Brian Palmer** (R-Romeo) ..... 0.0%