

August 2018

SCHUETTE GOES WEST FOR LG PICK; WHITMER TO DETROIT

Republican gubernatorial nominee Bill Schuette and Democratic gubernatorial nominee Gretchen Whitmer have their lieutenant governor running mates.

Mr. Schuette tapped former state representative and Kent County Clerk Lisa Posthumus Lyons who was below the radar of those being mentioned as possible running mates for Schuette – Macomb County Public Works Commissioner Candice Miller, Representative Laura Cox (R-Livonia) and Senator Tonya Schuitmaker (R-Lawton).

Mr. Schuette noted Ms. Lyons’ legislative experience (three terms in the House), her experience as Kent County Clerk and having been friends for a long time. She is the daughter of former Lt. Governor Dick Posthumus.

It has been reported that Ms. Lyons withdrew her support of presidential candidate Donald Trump in 2016 over his comments about celebrity and his conduct with women as did Lt. Governor Brian Calley for which the Schuette campaign regularly criticized him for during the primary race.

Ms. Whitmer named Garlin Gilchrist II of Detroit as her running mate.

35-year old Gilchrist is the former director of Innovation and Emerging Technology for the City of Detroit and serves as Executive Director for the Center for Social Media Responsibility at the University of Michigan. He has never held elective office and narrowly lost a bid to unseat Detroit City Clerk Janice Winfrey in 2017.

His name emerged recently as a leading candidate in recent among the other mentionables – Wayne County Sheriff Benny Napoleon and State Representative Sheldon Neeley (D-Flint).

Both Democrats and Republicans are expected to formally nominate candidates for statewide office at their party conventions next weekend.

SCHUETTE CALLS FOR DEBATES, WHITMER RESPONDS

Republican gubernatorial nominee Bill Schuette wasted no time after results were known to call for a “minimum of three televised debates, after agreeing to only two during the primary, being absent from the Republican gubernatorial “town hall” meetings around the state.

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Gretchen Whitmer was quick to respond. She wants a debate in Detroit that focuses on education and skilled training, a second in Flint on clean water and infrastructure and a third in Grand Rapids to focus on affordable health care.

GROT IS OUT

Republican conservative Stan Grot is dropping out of his bid to become the GOP Secretary of State nominee – leaving Mary Treder Lang and Joseph Guzman still in the race.

Mr. Grot cited family obligations, timing and the overall political atmosphere as making it difficult for him to continue his campaign.

SNYDER ANNOUNCES PLANS TO EXPAND INTERNET ACCESS

Governor Rick Snyder has announced new plans that would provide universal access to high-speed internet for every Michigan resident, business, region and community.

Under the plan, a Michigan Consortium of Advanced Networks (MCAN) would be created under Executive Order 2018-2 that was signed in January to solidify a vision for a connected state along with a roadmap to guide the state's goal of universal broadband service.

SNYDER, KHOURI: USE ALL ONLINE SALES TAX MONEY TO FIX ROADS

Based on a June U.S. Supreme Court decision, allowing the Michigan Department of Treasury to collect sales tax from retailers located outside the state, Governor Rick Snyder's administration is recommending the extra money – more than \$200 million – be spent to fix roads.

It is estimated the new revenue will bring in about \$203 million in FY 19, \$236 million in 2020 and \$248 million in 2021.

Starting October 1, the state will require online retailers outside of Michigan, that exceed \$100,000 in sales or 200 or more transactions in Michigan within the previous year, to pay the 6 percent tax on their sales to Michigan customers, according to Michigan Treasurer Nick Khouri in a news release on Monday.

The decision, however, will be up to the Legislature.

Most sales tax revenue goes to the State School Aid Fund, but Mr. Khouri said the amounts generated by this change could go to roads without violating constitutional requirements.

STATE TO CLOSE THIRD PRISON

Plans are underway for the state to close the Ojibway Correctional Facility in Gogebic County on December 1, according to the Michigan Department of Corrections (DOC).

Two other prisons have been closed in the past two years – Pugsley Correctional Facility, located in Grand Traverse County, and the West Shoreline Correctional Facility in Muskegon County.

While Ojibway has the ability to house 1,162 secure Level 1 prisoners, at present there are less than 800 incarcerated there.

The facility has 203 employees but currently there are 700 corrections officer vacancies across the system providing an opportunity for DOC to absorb as much of the staff as possible.

SUPREME COURT VOTES TO PUT REDISTRICTING ISSUE ON THE BALLOT

In a narrow 4-3 vote, the Michigan Supreme Court (MSC) ruled in favor of Voters Not Politicians (VNP), the group pushing the redistricting reform proposal.

GOP-backed Justice David Viviano wrote the majority opinion and was joined by GOP-backed Justice Beth Clement and Democrat nominated Justices Bridget McCormack and Richard Bernstein.

Chief Justice Stephen Markman wrote the dissent, joined by Justices Brian Zahaara and Curtis Wilder, all GOP-backed justices.

Justice Viviano wrote that VNP's amendment "does not propose changes creating the equivalent of a new constitution."

FEDERAL JUDGE: MICHIGAN CAN NOT ELIMINATE STRAIGHT TICKET VOTING

U.S. District Judge Gershwin Drain has issued a permanent injunction stopping the state from enacting Public Act (PA) 268 which eliminated the option of straight-ticket voting in the foreseeable future for Michigan voters.

In issuing the injunction, Gershwin said eliminating it would lengthen long lines and increase wait times for all voters and discriminate against African-American voters.

Judge Drain said the Democratic Party is successful with straight-ticket voters and taking away this advantage "was a motivating consideration in the Michigan Legislature's enactment of PA 268."

STATE APPROVES TWO MARIJUANA TESTING FACILITIES

With the approval of the testing facilities, the state believes a fully functioning medical marijuana industry can be up and running in a months' time.

Despite the backlog of processing hundreds of medical marijuana facility applications, the state Bureau of Medical Marijuana Regulation (BMMR) says all five components of the regulated industry – growers, processors, provisioning centers, secure transporters and testing facilities – have at least one approved license operator in the state.

The state now says it has no intention of extending the deadline again for the current operating facilities to get fully licensed by September 15 or be forced to close down.

TWO SCHOOL DISTRICTS HIT BULLSEYE ON WEAPONS BAN

In affirming a lower court's ruling, the Michigan Supreme Court (MSC) ruled the Ann Arbor and Clio school districts' ban on anyone bringing a weapon into a school building will stand.

Attorneys for Ann Arbor and Clio Area school districts argued in separate lawsuits that schools are safety sensitive zones.

Attorneys for Michigan Gun Owners Inc. and Michigan Open Carry urged the Supreme Court to find that school districts can't adopt strict policies banning open-carry because it subverts state laws.

The high court did not agree.

TALENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR TO DEPART

Talent and Economic Development (TED) Director Roger Curtis will leave state government September 30 to accept a position in the private sector.

Mr. Curtis has served in that position since November 2016.

Governor Rick Snyder has not decided yet on either an interim or permanent appointment for the department director's position.