

Special Election Report
August 8, 2018

WHITMER, SCHUETTE CAPTURE EASY WINS IN THE PRIMARIES

For the next three months, Michigan voters will hear “Fix the Damn Roads” and “I have been endorsed by President Trump” as Democrat Gretchen Whitmer and Republican Bill Schuette won their respective primaries and will slug it out to see who will succeed Governor Rick Snyder as Governor in the November general election.

The outcomes were a foregone conclusion as both candidates were frontrunners in their races from the get go.

Mr. Schuette defeated Lt. Governor Brian Calley 51 to 25 percent. Senator Patrick Colbeck (R-Canton Twp.) garnered 13 percent and Dr. Jim Hines received 11 percent.

Ms. Whitmer won her party’s nomination 52 to 32 percent over Abdul El-Sayed. Self-funded Shri Thanedar spent at least \$10 million of his personal fortune to capture 16 percent of the vote.

JAMES DEFEATS PENSLER, TAKES ON STABENOW IN NOVEMBER

In his first foray into politics, John James, a 37-year-old Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran and businessman, defeated venture capitalist Sandy Pensler to win the Republican primary and will take on three-term incumbent U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Delta Twp.) in the November general election.

Mr. Pensler held a lead over Mr. James during most of the race, but in the final weeks the James campaign secured the endorsement of President Donald Trump and used the President’s voice urging a vote for James on robo calls.

OTHER RACES OF NOTE

First-term Senator David Knezek (D-Dearborn Heights) lost to former Detroit school board candidate Betty Jean Alexander by more than 3,000 votes in the 5th Senate District Democratic primary.

Second term incumbent Representative David Maturen (R- Vicksburg.) was defeated by longtime Republican grassroots activist Matt Hall in the 63rd House District. Mr. Hall was a Donald Trump for President congressional district chairman.

In the 35th House District, Senator Vincent Gregory (D-Lathrup Village), lost his bid to return to the House, finishing in third place behind Democratic primary winner Kyra Harris Bolden.

In a rematch, Lori Stone, a Warren public school teacher who lost in the 2016 Democratic primary by 20 votes, knocked off her former opponent, Representative Patrick Green (D-Warren) in the 28th House District Democratic primary.

In the 31st Senate District, former Representative Kevin Daley defeated Representative Gary Glenn (R-Midland), chair of the House Energy Policy Committee and the major Michigan utilities' worst nightmare, in the Republican primary. Mr. Daley will now face Democrat Cynthia Luczak, the Bay County Clerk.

In the 18th Senate District, former Representative Jeff Irwin barely won the Democratic primary, pulling a 36 to 35 percent win over Michelle Deatrick by 239 votes.

Former Representative Jon Bumstead beat incumbent Representative Holly Hughes (R-White River Twp.) in the 34th Senate District Republican primary by a 52 to 48 percent margin.

In the 24th Senate District, Representative Tom Barrett (R-Potterville) won the Republican nomination over Representative Brett Roberts (R-Charlotte) in the Republican primary for the right to take on Democrat Kelly Rossman-McKinney in the November general election.

The name Cherry will again appear on the ballot in November as John D. Cherry, son of former Lt. Governor John Cherry and Representative Pam Faris (D-Clio) easily won the 49th House District Democratic primary in a six-way horserace.

Lena Epstein, a former Donald Trump for Michigan co-chair, won a competitive five-way race for the Republican nomination in the 11th Congressional District. She will face Democrat Haley Stevens, who also won a five-way primary.

In the 9th Congressional District, Andy Levin, son of outgoing U.S. Representative Sandy Levin, beat a challenge from well-financed former Representative Ellen Lipton 52 to 43 percent in the Democratic primary. Mr. Levin will now face Candius Stearns in the November 6 general election.

In the 8th Congressional District, Democrat Elissa Slotkin easily defeated Chris Smith and will face U.S. Representative Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) who handily won his primary.

MICHIGAN PRIMARY VOTER TURNOUT SETS MODERN RECORD

With unofficial results from 81 of 83 counties cast it is expected voter turnout to top 2 million when final numbers are added from Wayne and Genesee counties.

However, without those two counties, vote totals are already higher than any gubernatorial primary election since at least 1978, according to historical data. The previous high mark was in 2002 when 1.72 million voters cast ballots.