



## CAPITOL REPORT

November 3, 2006

**T**he **nastiest** – and **most expensive** – political campaign in Michigan history mercifully comes to an end next Tuesday. We're talking about the campaign in a broad sense, by which we mean everything from Governor to State Legislature. The money spent and venom spewed, across the board, exceeds anything ever seen in this state. At the national level, Democratic recapture of the U.S. House is a certainty, and Senate control probably rests on the outcome in just three states; Missouri, Tennessee, and Virginia. Elsewhere, Republican U.S. Senate prospects are bleak.

Herewith is Kelley Cawthorne's **inside view** of what will happen just four days from now: Governor **Granholt** has opened a nine point lead over Dick **DeVos** in the governor's race according to most published polls, and we have the sense that she will indeed win re-election. **Yet...**sixteen years ago, John **Engler** came from further back in the last four days to nip heavily-favored incumbent Jim **Blanchard**, and four years ago Dick **Posthumus** cut his deficit in half in the last few days to finish only modestly behind winner Jennifer **Granholt**. **Add this:** Republicans had a superb voter identification and get out the vote campaign four years ago and some insiders tell us it's even better this year. **And this:** other insiders we know say that internal tracking polls indeed show **DeVos** gaining in just the last couple of days. **And finally:** even several professional pollsters reporting the nine point **Granholt** lead have been saying right along that by Election Day the difference will be down to one or two points. **So:** we think **Granholt wins**, perhaps handily, but history suggests that an upset is not totally out of the question.

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For the U.S. Senate, incumbent Debbie **Stabenow will win**. Her challenger, Mike **Bouchard**, has run a good race but he's been heavily outspent. It remains something of a mystery why the National Republican Senate Campaign committee is dumping nearly \$1 million into the **Bouchard** campaign in the last week, but it may be an indication of just how thoroughly the GOP has written off its prospects in other U.S. Senate races across the country. A noble effort by **Bouchard**, but not enough.

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Secretary of State Terri Lynn **Land** and Attorney General Mike **Cox**, both Republicans, will win re-election. The rest of the state ticket (MSU Trustees, U-M Regents, Wayne State Board, State Board of Education) will probably **all** go Democratic. State Supreme Court Justices Maura **Corrigan** and Michael **Cavanagh** will easily win re-election. No changes in the Michigan congressional delegation, though Republican Tim **Walberg** is being pressed by a Democratic unknown.

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The two major ballot questions (Proposal 2 which would ban affirmation action and Proposal 5 which would mandate K-16 spending levels) seem **likely** to have different outcomes. We think every indication now points to Prop 2 **passing** and Prop 5 **failing**, although a weaker-than-expected effort by the many opponents of Prop 5 leaves the door ajar for the **possibility** of it yet squeaking through.

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That leaves the battle over **control of the Michigan Legislature**, now held by Republicans. Some at Kelley Cawthorne have been saying since last January that Democrats had a much better chance of winning control of either or both chambers than most of the “experts” were willing to acknowledge. We **still** think so, and at least one of the “old grey” heads at KC puts chances of Democratic control of **both** chambers at not less than 50-50. What has clouded the outlook in just the last few days is the avalanche of money that has poured into about a dozen hotly contested races for State House and Senate.

The nearly \$50 million spent by the two gubernatorial candidates, far and away more than ever spent before, is stunning enough. But **equally stunning** is the amount being spent for control of the Michigan Legislature. And not just by the two political parties: last minute millions are being poured in by a PAC funded mainly by liberal activist Jon **Stryker**...and it's striking terror in the hearts of Republicans like Sen. Laura **Toy** of Livonia who only two weeks ago looked safe in her re-election bid against Democratic State Rep. Glenn **Anderson**. Even in a House race which shouldn't have been that competitive, Rep. David **Palsrok's** 101<sup>st</sup> district, **Stryker** reportedly has committed well over \$100,000 there in just the last few days, so much that **Palsrok's** opponent may not be able to find enough ways to spend it all.

Two House races in the Jackson area plus one in Monroe have blown the lid off old spending records, with hundreds of thousands coming in just during the last week. Those three seats are crucial to Democratic efforts to win a majority in the House. We don't see **any** incumbent House Dem losing. Vulnerable incumbent House Republicans certainly include Rep. David **Farhat** (who some have written off), Reps. Leslie **Mortimer** and Rick **Baxter** in the Jackson area, and **possibly** Dave **Law** of Bloomfield Township, John **Pastor** of Livonia, and

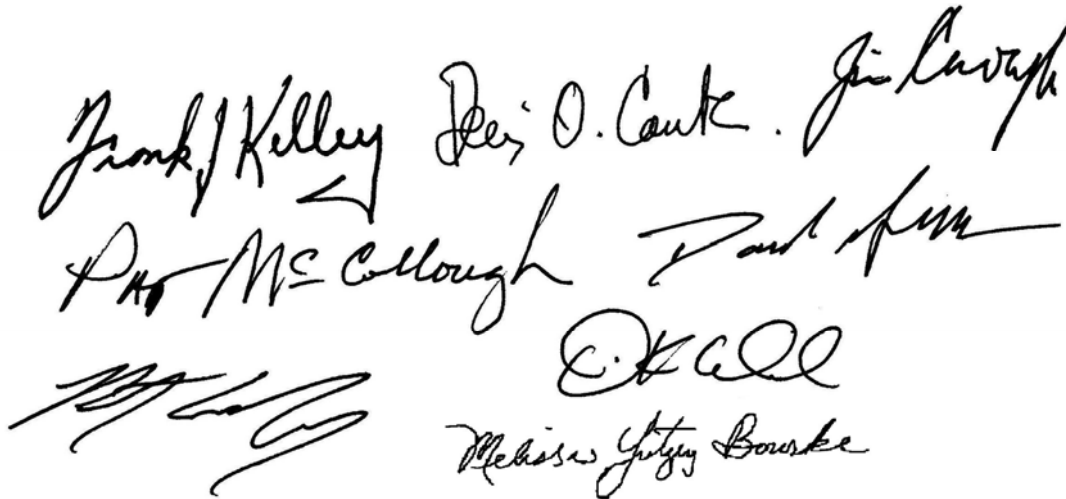
only **remotely** (despite the big money against him), Dave **Palsrok** of Manistee. Further Dem pick-ups could come in Saginaw and Kent county seats now held by the GOP. **Result?** Dem control entirely possible.

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In the State Senate, huge money has centered on three races where Dems may well snatch seats now held by Republicans...in Kalamazoo, Saginaw/Alma, and Oakland County. That would, by itself, produce a 19-19 tie which would be broken by the lieutenant governor, who we think will be Democrat John **Cherry**. **Net result?** Dem control of the State Senate for the first time in nearly 24 years. **A certainty?** No, but we don't see switches in any Senate seats now held by Dems, and up to a half dozen **possible** (though not necessarily likely) switches **away** from the GOP.

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Next Wednesday, we'll tell you what **actually happened** in the elections. Meantime, we hope you have found our pre-election crystal ball gazing informative, perhaps somewhat scary, and maybe even entertaining.



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