

2016 General Election Briefing for AAUW of Michigan Executive Board

November 10, 2016

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Overview

Sixty-five percent of Michigan's registered voters cast a ballot in the 2016 general election. That compares to 64 percent in 2012. A total of 4.9 million voters participated in the election, compared to 4.8 million four years ago.

The Michigan Presidential race results were not available until the wee hours of Wednesday morning, after Hillary Clinton had already conceded the race. Trump won by a very narrow margin of 13,107 votes out of 4,786,223 cast according to the Secretary of State Web site.

87,810 voters this election cast a ballot but did not cast a vote for president. That compares to 49,840 under-votes for president in 2012. This tells you something about the dissatisfaction with all the candidates.

Trump won 75 counties and 8 counties went for Clinton. The nine counties that went for Clinton: Wayne, Oakland, Genesee, Washtenaw, Ingham, Kalamazoo, Muskegon and Marquette. Clinton's greatest margin of victory was in Washtenaw, where she won 68 percent of the vote.

Here is the chart of unofficial vote totals from the Secretary of State Web site for [General Election Results](#) accessed at 6:25 p.m. Thursday, November 10. The results will not be certified until the Board of State Canvassers meets in a few weeks.

Date: 11/08/2016		83/83 Counties	
Unofficial President of the United States		Votes	Percent
Republican	Trump, Donald J.	2,277,914	47.60
Democratic	Clinton, Hillary	2,264,807	47.33
Libertarian	Johnson, Gary	172,726	3.61
US Taxpayers	Castle, Darrell L.	16,125	0.34
Green	Stein, Jill	51,420	1.07
Natural Law	Soltysik, Emidio Mimi	2,231	0.05
Total Votes:		4,785,223	

If Clinton had netted the same number of votes that outgoing President Barack Obama did in 2012, she would have won.

Trump is the first Republican to win Michigan since George H.W. Bush in 1988.

An excellent analysis of voter rationale by the Pew Center is [here](#). Inside Higher Education carried a story today about the worries educators have about the President-elect [here](#). "Many academic leaders fear the president-elect could scare off foreign students, encourage discord on campuses and promote the anti-intellectualism that won him broad support from non-college-educated males."

Turnout

There was a dramatic drop in Democratic turnout in Detroit and Wayne County.

There was a surge of support for Trump in white working class areas like Macomb County, older industrial centers and rural areas outstate.

Rural areas saw significant growth in Trump's winning numbers compared to 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney

Bernie Porn of EPIC/MRA said once FBI Director Comey announced a renewed investigation of more Clinton emails, there was a significant drop for Clinton, especially among Republican women who were considering voting for her. When the FBI then cleared her a second time, this time just two days before the election, Mr. Porn said there was not enough time for that to have had an effect with the voters. Many had already voted by absentee.

The State of the State Survey from the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research at Michigan State University continued gathering responses up to November 6, with a "dramatic pro-Trump change" in the last days.

Porn said tests done during the election found that voters responded more positively to messages on the economy and issues that affected them rather than on attacks solely on Trump.

Virtually every public poll of the state showed Democrat Hillary Clinton leading by 3 percentage points to 7 percentage points. On Election Day morning, Nate Silver's 538 had Clinton chances of winning in Michigan at 78 percent. But on Friday, November 4, Republican National Committee Chair Reince Preibus contacted the Michigan Republican Party and informed it that RNC data modeling showed Republican Donald Trump winning Michigan by 8,000 votes.

Congress

The 14 member Congressional delegation from Michigan will remain the same split, 9 Republicans and 5 Democrats.

In the open First Congressional District in the U.P. and northern lower Michigan, Republican Jack Bergman of Watersmeet (and Louisiana) beat Democrat Lon Johnson 55 to 40 percent.

U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg (R-Tipton) beat Rep. Gretchen Driskell (D-Saline) in the 7th U.S. House District 55 to 40 percent.

Incumbent U.S. Rep. Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) kept his 8th U.S. House District seat against Democrat Suzanna Shkreli 56 to 39 percent.

Michigan Supreme Court

Incumbent Supreme Court Justices David Viviano and Justice Joan Larsen won re-election to the state's top court, besting their opponents by results that were almost three-to-one.

Michigan House

Republicans kept the 63-47 majority in the State House they won in 2014. Democrats lost incumbent Rep. Bill LaVoy (D-Monroe). They did end up winning the 23rd House District seat with Rep.-elect Darrin Camilleri of Brownstown Township winning there.

Rep. Kurt Heise (D-Plymouth) won his local race and will resign so the Dems will have 46 votes through lame duck.

Current Speaker of the House Rep. Kevin Cotter (R-Mt. Pleasant) is term limited. This afternoon the House Republican Caucus elected Rep. Tom Leonard III (R-DeWitt Township) to the Speaker-elect of the House position to serve 2017-2018. Rep. Dan Lauwers of Brockway was elected the majority floor leader.

House Minority Leader Tim Greimel announced Wednesday he will not seek re-election to lead the House Democratic Caucus after the party failed to narrow the Republican majority, let alone win control. This afternoon House Democrats elected Sam Singh (D-East Lansing) Democratic (Minority) Leader and Christine Grieg (D-Farmington) as Democratic Floor Leader.

Education Boards

Republicans won five of the eight education seats.

State Board of Education - The two Republican candidates for the State Board of Education won; fiercely partisan tea partier and former Rep. Tom McMillin and Nicolette Snyder. They ousted Board President John Austin (D-Ann Arbor).

The Board now is split 4 -4, not seen since 1995-96. Leadership election will be something to watch.

Likely Common Core Standards adopted in 2010 and recently-adopted LGBTQ guidelines will be on the table for repeal.

University Boards - The Republican rout was not as complete among the university boards, with the parties splitting the two available seats (all currently held by Democrats) on each of the three boards.

Michigan State University Board of Trustees – Incumbent member Dianne Byrum held onto her seat, but came in second to Republican Daniel Kelly. Incumbent Board member Diann Woodard was third and lost her seat.

The result leaves the board with a 4-4 partisan split from the current 5-3 Democratic majority.

University of Michigan - Democratic University of Michigan Regent Denise Iltch was able to retain her seat, but Republican Ron Weiser (former Republican Party Chair) was elected for the other seat.

Long-time Regent Laurence Deitch lost as a distant fourth. The Board will move from a 6-2 Democratic majority to 5-3 in favor of Democrats.

Wayne State University Board of Governors – There were two open seats on this board; Democrat Mark Gaffney (former AFL-CIO Director and current instructor at WSU) was first and Republican Michael Busuito took the second seat. The Board will move from a 6-2 Democratic majority to 5-3 in favor of Democrats.

Regional Transit Authority

A \$3 billion, 20-year tax proposal that would have relied on a 1.2 mill property tax increase to finance a Regional Transit Authority in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties failed by 19,517 votes. The measure passed in Wayne and Washtenaw counties. It lost by 1,100 votes in Oakland County, but it was crushed by a 74,647 vote defeat in Macomb County. Under the 2012 legislation creating the authority, the RTA has to wait two years before seeking another attempt before the voters

Macomb County

Trump helped lead Republicans to a major rout in Macomb County. U.S. Rep. Candice Miller won the public works commissioner post while two Democrats who were heavy favorites - former Reps. Fred Miller and Derek Miller - lost bids for the clerk and treasurer's posts, respectively, in huge upsets. Trump campaigned here several times.

2018

Speculation about the 2018 statewide races has already begun. Lt. Governor Brian Calley, Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof of West Olive and Attorney General Bill Schuette on the Republican side and U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee of Flint and Ingham County Prosecutor Gretchen Whitmer on the Democratic side are most mentioned. U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow is expected to seek a fourth term for the six-year term.

State Campaign Money

With regard to money raised for state office campaigns, the Michigan Campaign Finance Network says the most active 150 political action committees (PACs) in Michigan have raised \$43.19 million as of the last reporting period ending October 20, a 24 percent increase over where the top 150 PACs were at the same point in the 2012 cycle.

The total is the most the top 150 committees have raised in a two-year presidential cycle in the state's history. It's up 45 percent over where the top 150 PACs were as of October 20, 2004.

The United Auto Workers Michigan Voluntary PAC reported raising \$1.1 million between July 21 and October 20. The West Michigan-based DeVos family gave \$360,000 to the House Republican Campaign Committee. And a new PAC funded by Republican state senators raised \$211,100.

Much of the spending in the quarter was focused on the battle for control of the Michigan House. The House Republican Campaign Committee (HRCC) had raised \$3.9 million from January 1, 2015, through October 20, 2016, according to its campaign finance disclosures. The House Democratic Fund (HDF) had raised \$2.8 million. They are the top two fundraising committees in the state, and both are raising more than they have in past cycles.

HRCC's top donors included nine members of the DeVos family who each gave \$40,000 to combine for \$360,000. The Michigan Republican Party, Autocam president John Kennedy, his wife, Nancy Kennedy, and the Republican State Leadership Committee also each gave \$40,000.

For HDF, its top donors included numerous leadership PACs and candidate committees connected to its members. The Bernstein PAC also gave \$25,000, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers PAC Voluntary Fund gave \$15,000 and former Sen. Gretchen Whitmer's Whitmer Leadership Fund gave \$10,000.

Gov. Rick Snyder's Relentless Positive Action PAC raised \$161,275 last quarter. The PAC spent \$38,327. Of that, \$16,000 was given to Republican State House candidates. Relentless Positive Action's top donor was William Parfet, owner of the Northwood Group, who gave \$125,000.

Legislative News

The Michigan Legislature returned November 9 and 10 to elect leaders and have a few hearings. Both chambers return again for more lame-duck session after Thanksgiving for at least 9 session days, and perhaps more. Lame duck is renowned for passage of long-delayed or controversial measures that lawmakers feared to address before the election.

Breast Milk and Fetal Tissue – The House Health Policy Committee held a November 9 hearing on two groups of bills of interest to the AAUW of Michigan. [HB 4206](#), [HB 4691](#), and [HB 5547](#) regulating breast milk and prohibiting internet sale of breast milk was reported out on a bi-partisan basis. I put in a card supporting the bills on our behalf as I did at the first hearing.

The Committee also held a hearing but no vote was taken on [SB 564](#) and [565](#) that would criminalize compensation for the distribution or transfer of fetal tissue from abortions. Currently women getting surgical abortions at some clinics are asked if they would like to donate the products of conception being removed from their uterus for scientific research or not. If they do not want to donate the material, it is disposed of as medical waste pursuant to state regulations (sanitary incineration). There is some nominal cost in packaging, storing, and transferring donated products of conception. Right to Life characterizes payment to clinics for these costs as "selling baby parts" and it wants to ban it through this legislation.

At the hearing, Right To Life testified for the bills and Dr. Thomas Allswede, chair of the Michigan chapter of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists testified against them. Committee Chair Mike Callton stated that he was working on substitute bills. The Choice Coalition of which we are a member is working on language. I posted a short report about it on our Facebook page.

Energy – An issue that has been debated in both the House and Senate for nearly two years without action by either chamber had a breakthrough on October 20 when the Michigan Chamber of Commerce indicated that it supports the newly revised version of the Michigan Senate's energy bills, [SB 437](#) and [438](#). Today the Senate passed the bills on a partisan basis. The big issues are what to do about the electric choice market that some schools and businesses like and the utilities do not, and whether to include any kind of provision related to renewable energy mandates. The renewable energy standard is now at 10 percent, and the electricity choice set-aside is also now at 10 percent.

Public Pensions - Amway President Doug DeVos recently announced that his conservative West Michigan Policy Forum's top priority is to transition Michigan government employees from defined benefit pensions and retiree health care (OPEBs) to 401(k)-style post-employment benefits. The news immediately caused speculation on legislative movement on the issue, perhaps in the lame-duck session.

Although mostly aimed at the alarming unfunded accrued liability in most municipal pension funds, the initiative might also include the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS) and other pension funds administered by Office of Retirement Services.

SB 102 sponsored by Sen. Phil Pavlov (R-St. Clair) would move future school employees to a defined contribution system. It was introduced in February 2015 and assigned to the Senate Committee on Appropriations with no subsequent action. Pavlov has long advocated ending the current hybrid system that gives new school employees some pension benefit and some defined contribution benefit. The hybrid system was created in 2012 along with elimination of school employee retiree health insurance for newly hired employees. A 2012 study determined that if public school employees were to be provided the same defined contribution plan as state employees hired after 1997 receive, the added cost would be \$13.6 billion over 30 years.

It appears that Governor Snyder's administration opposes eliminating the school employee hybrid plan. Kerrie VandenBosch, Director of the Office of Retirement Services, was quoted as saying "The [school retiree] hybrid plan is 100 percent funded today, and it's one-third less risky than a defined benefit plan." She stated that the liabilities on the MPERS system are related to the legacy defined benefit plan, which has already been closed and closing the hybrid system will not address the defined benefit plan unfunded accrued liabilities.

If Governor Snyder and succeeding governors keep up the current effort to appropriate funds for paying down the pension liabilities during the state budget process, the liability should be gone by 2038.

The major causes in the low percentage of public pension funding is the extreme economic recession of 2008 and the relatively slow recovery from it combined with an overly optimistic discount rate that has kept public employer contributions to the pension funds too low.
