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DR. GERALD FAVERMAN, Chairman of the Board

A LETTER OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL COMMENTARY

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TO: FISCAL AWARENESS SERVICE Subscribers

FROM: Gerald A. Faverman, Alan Harris, and William Rustem

SUBJECT: 1986 MICHIGAN ELECTIONS: A PRE-PRIMARY PERSPECTIVE

The August 5 primary election is only 8 days away, with the November 4 general election to follow 91 days later. The governor and the entire Michigan legislature are up for election.

The Democratic contest for governor is one in name only, and Governor Blanchard is obviously looking past the primary to the general election, where he hopes a major victory will vindicate his stewardship of the last four years and catapult him onto the national scene. The Republican race has become extraordinarily tight, with early front-runner Bill Lucas, the favorite of Michigan party leaders and the Washington establishment, finding himself cash-short in a stiff fight with Dick Chrysler. The race is too close to call, and the margin of victory for the winner may be less than the statistical margin of error from polling results.

Party leaders continue to expect Lucas to win, but are apprehensive about Chrysler's expected TV blitz and unsure about the effect of Colleen Engler's surprisingly deft appearances. No matter who wins, Republicans are likely to face serious problems in November against an extremely strong incumbent.

Much has been said and written about the contest for governor, but little attention has been paid to the equally important contest to control the legislature. The battle for control of the state Senate presents real opportunities for whichever party can marshal the required resources or be the beneficiary of political good fortune. From the Republicans' standpoint, odds are longer against recapturing the governorship or state House than in favor of retaining Senate control.

Republicans now have a two-seat Senate majority (20-18). If Blanchard is reelected, the loss of only one Senate seat could cause Republicans to lose control in 1987 because Democratic Lieutenant Governor Griffiths will have the tie-breaking vote. Unquestionably, the Republicans best chance of retaining power in Michigan is to retain control of the Senate while striving to pick up additional House seats and the governorship.

From the Democrats' point of view, the Senate is the only remaining obstacle to their party's control of state government. With the House and the governor's office in hand, the Democrats are ostensibly hungry to capture the Senate. They may need to win only one additional seat to ensure control of all three branches of state government.

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In the state House, the Democrats currently have a 57-53 lead and would like nothing better than to increase their advantage. The Republicans need to win three seats to gain majority status. Although both parties are fighting to win each seat individually, a major gubernatorial landslide for either party could well determine a number of legislative seats. The coattail effect is not one a political party can count on, but it could play a role if the margin of victory in the governor's race is more than nine percent.

The following legislators are not seeking reelection:

<u>SENATE</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>
<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Alan Cropsey	Mike Busch
Harry DeMaso	Doug Carl
	Fred Dillingham
<u>Democrats</u>	Colleen Engler
Gary Corbin	Ed Geerlings
James DeSana	Ernie Nash
Patrick McCollough	Bill Runco
	<u>Democrats</u>
	John Cherry
	Richard Fitzpatrick
	Don Koivisto
	Matt McNeely

Of the 33 incumbent senators running for reelection, 11 face primary opponents. In the House, 22 of the 99 incumbents seeking reelection face primary opponents.

The outcome of the following races will determine the nature of the Senate and House and which party's political agenda will direct Michigan's future for at least the next two years.

Michigan Senate

Seats That Will Make a Difference

District 9--Incumbent Republican Senator Kirby Holmes faces a strong primary challenge from Representative Doug Carl and real estate agent and township supervisor Ted Odrobina, in addition to two other opponents. This district is in politically volatile Macomb County, where Republicans have only recently gained a toehold. This seat could fall to the Democrats in November if the Republican nominee fails to win the primary by a clear margin.

District 10--Incumbent Democrat Patrick McCollough decided not to seek reelection. Should John Hertel be victorious in his campaign to succeed William Lucas as Wayne County executive, McCollough will go on to a new career as deputy county executive. State Representative William Runco, an energetic and extremely strong campaigner, is the lone Republican candidate. Former state Senator George Hart is the likely winner in the Democratic primary. A Runco-Hart race will be one of the most closely contested campaigns in the fall.

District 14--State Senator Jerome Hart has been in the legislature since 1964. Health problems have slowed him down, but in this fundamentally Democratic

district he has wide name recognition and a reservoir of goodwill. Two Republicans are vying for the nomination, with Saginaw school board president Ruth Braun the front-runner. Traditional Saginaw Republicans have rallied around her candidacy and cranked up the old organization that was in power when James Harvey was the area's congressman. This contest will be crucial since Republicans are hoping it will result in capture of one of the seats needed to widen their margin.

District 20--Incumbent Republican Senator Harry DeMaso decided to retire from public office after thirty years in the legislature. Three Republicans, including state Representative Ernie Nash and Battle Creek mayor and physician John Schwarz, are seeking the nomination in what is one of the closest and toughest Republican primary races. Representative Richard Fitzpatrick is the Democrats' nominee. Many observers view this as the closest and most critical race in the general election. Look for record spending by both parties. From the Democrats' point of view, this seat could be the key to return to majority status in the Senate.

Other Races to Watch

District 1--John Lauve, who started the year running the "Recall Blanchard" petition drive, is in a three-way GOP primary to face Democratic Senator John Kelly in November.

District 2--Basil Brown, the dean of the Senate who is battling charges of drug possession, faces three Democratic primary opponents, but one should not bet against the old fox Senator Brown.

District 4--Seventy-one-year-old Democratic state Senator David Holmes faces a rare primary challenge from a potentially dangerous opponent. Horace Sheffield III, whose father is a well-known labor leader and long-time community activist, may give Holmes his strongest competition in many years.

District 7--Senator DeSana's old seat will most likely stay Democratic in November, but the primary has four Democrats competing for the nomination, including Congressman John Dingell, Jr.'s son, Christopher Dingell. The Dingell name is an institution in the Downriver area, and interestingly, both Congressman Dingell and his father, John Dingell, Sr., before him began their public service careers by running for the state Senate.

District 19--Incumbent Republican Senator Nick Smith faces a politically troublesome primary challenge from Shirley Zeller, a member of the State Transportation Commission from Jackson, the most populous part of this district.

District 21--Incumbent Republican Harmon Cropsey won the primary four years ago by only 319 votes and the general election by less than 5,000 votes out of 67,000 cast. Cropsey faces certified public accountant Dale Shugars in this year's primary contest. This race has the potential for surprise. In this historically Republican district, the incumbent Republican faces more danger in the primary than in the general election.

District 26--The most interesting Democratic primary race will occur in this district, where incumbent Senator Gilbert DiNello, a conservative who often votes with the Republicans, faces strong challenges from two opponents. The outcome will be close, but the winner is assured victory in November since, surprisingly, the Republican party is not fielding a candidate.

District 29--Incumbent Democrat Gary Corbin is retiring from the Senate after serving for twelve years. Democratic Representative John Cherry and Republican Dale McMichael will face off in November in what should be a spirited fight. According to some Republican strategists, this seat has a marginal chance of changing parties.

District 30--Republican Senator Alan Cropsey is not seeking reelection, but is running instead for a seat on the Michigan Court of Appeals. State Representative Fred Dillingham is taking on two challengers in the Republican primary, but should have little trouble gaining the nomination. Two candidates are vying for the Democratic nomination, including Patricia McAvoy, a former state Senate Democratic staff member. McAvoy lost to Cropsey four years ago by only 2,100 votes out of 71,000 cast, but many Republicans feel Dillingham will be a stronger candidate than Cropsey was in 1982.

District 33--Incumbent Republican Phil Arthurhultz will brush by his one primary opponent and will face Democrat Dale Williams, a physician, in the general election. This is one of the seats that could be influenced by the gubernatorial tide.

District 35--Republican Senate Majority Leader John Engler will face his strongest opponent in some time in the fall--Democrat Gerald White, the Midland County prosecutor. Although some Democratic strategists believe White can knock off this dangerous foe, or at least keep him busy in the fall, Engler is a master campaigner and should win his third term.

Michigan House of Representatives

Seats That Will Make a Difference

District 26--This vacancy, created by Republican Representative Doug Carl's candidacy for the Senate, has resulted in a real dog fight. Three Democrats and four Republicans are vying for the seat. Republicans have made inroads into this traditionally Democratic area, but the lack of an incumbent may allow the Democrats to retake the district.

District 31--Incumbent Republican Bill Runco is seeking election to the Senate, giving Democrats a real chance to retake this seat. Two Republicans and three Democrats are running in the primary, with strong candidates in both parties. Among them is Democrat John O'Reilly, Jr., the son of a former mayor of Dearborn, and Republican Marjorie Powell, a former high school teacher and former president of the Dearborn City Council. This district will bear watching through November.

District 66--Representative Gregory Gruse is probably the most vulnerable Republican officeholder. He will face a very strong rematch in November from former Representative Wilfred Webb. Democrat Webb lost to Gruse two years ago by only 234 votes in a major upset. This seat is a key Democratic target.

District 74--Incumbent Democratic Representative John Maynard will square off in November against Michael Scoglietti in a hot rematch of their contest of two years ago. In that race, Maynard won by 851 votes out of 37,000 cast, and this year's battle should be another cliff-hanger.

District 75--Incumbent Republican George Furton is unopposed in the primary, but former Democratic state Representative Ken DeBeaussaert faces two primary opponents. Furton defeated DeBeaussaert in 1984 by 1,200 votes out of almost

32,000 cast. A rematch could prove to be even closer in this most uncertain county if DeBeaussaert is a solid primary winner.

District 76--Republican incumbent Terry London will again face a strong challenge from conservative Democrat James Docherty in November. Docherty, the former state representative, lost to London in 1984 by 3,600 votes out of 33,000 cast. This should be a close race in November.

District 94--Two strong Republican contenders--Ken Sikkema and Harold Voorhees--are vying for the right to take on incumbent Democrat Jelt Sietsema, an 18-year House veteran. Sietsema's races are always close and interesting, and this one should be no exception.

District 97--Incumbent Republican Ed Geerlings is not seeking reelection. Six Republicans are running, with the strongest being Nancy Crandall and Jeff Dykema. Two Democrats are seeking the nomination, including Debbie Farhat, daughter of Lansing lobbyist Ed Farhat. Democrats are optimistic that they can win this targeted seat to increase their margin.

District 99--Incumbent Republican Colleen Engler is running for governor. There are two Democrats vying for the nomination, but party traditionalists have rallied around Molly Bopp. Bopp lost to Engler in 1984 by 1,100 votes out of 30,000 cast. Four Republicans are running, including G. Patrick Doyle, mayor of Mt. Pleasant. Republicans are confident that Doyle will hold onto the seat in November, but Bopp has a fair chance in this traditionally Republican district.

District 100--Republican Mike Busch's retirement gives lone Democratic candidate Roland Niederstadt a slight advantage in not having to face an incumbent. This traditionally Republican seat bears watching, since a divisive primary battle among the six Republican candidates could improve the Democrats' chances.

Other Races to Watch

District 21--Incumbent Democrat Lynn Owen and Republican candidate James Schmitz are unopposed in the primary. These two candidates squared off in 1984, and Owen won by only 500 votes.

District 25--Incumbent Democrat Dennis Dutko faces two opponents in the primary. Three candidates are fighting for the Republican nomination, including Warren city councilman Don Blevins. The real question in this district is whether or not Dutko's opponents can turn his legal difficulties into a significant campaign issue. If they are successful, Dutko and the Democrats could be in for a real horse race.

District 46--Incumbent Mary Brown could face another stiff fight in November from Republican Randy Mason, a Kalamazoo police department detective. Her Kalamazoo district is politically diverse and somewhat uncertain. Her victories are seldom without a battle, and she's never overconfident. However, Brown, who is finishing her tenth year in the House, has a long record of winning tough races.

District 51--Incumbent Republican Fred Dillingham is running for the state Senate. This is a safe Republican district, but look for a good primary fight among the five Republican candidates--Robert Gardella, Susan Grimes Munsell,

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Vicki Riley, Sue Spagnuolo, and Stanley Steinke. The winner should win easily in November.

District 82--Incumbent Democrat Tom Scott could be in a stiffer fight than expected from businessman and Genesee County commissioner George Emery. If Scott does not win strongly, he could have difficulty in November from lone Republican candidate Dean Bagnall, who lost to Scott two years ago by 3,000 votes out of 35,000 cast.

District 105--Representative Tom Alley is unopposed in the primary. Three Republicans are vying for the chance to oppose him in November and, if the party is united behind the primary winner, Alley could be in for a tight race.

District 110--The incumbent Democratic representative, Don Koivisto, is not running for reelection. This far western, Upper Peninsula district is a safe Democratic area, but with nine candidates vying for the party's nomination, the primary should be a real battle and, some Republican strategists think, a potential opportunity.

Conclusion

The complexion of the next House of Representatives is not likely to be much different from the current one. The House Democrats are well organized, and with seven Republican incumbents not running for reelection and only four Democratic incumbents retiring, the Republicans face a long, uphill battle to gain House control. Republicans benefited two years ago from the Reagan landslide; they will not have that advantage this time.

The GOP gained six House seats from the Democrats in 1984, but without a popular Republican presidential incumbent at the top of the ticket, few expect a repeat in 1986. Instead, the top of the ticket this year will be strong for the Democrats, which should help them retake three or four seats lost to Republicans in 1984. Overall, look for a Democratic gain of two to six House seats, more if a Blanchard landslide (55 percent or more) occurs.

In the state Senate, Republicans are campaign tested and well organized, as evidenced by their three consecutive special election victories. The Republicans have two Senate incumbents retiring versus the Democrats' three. We believe that even with a strong Republican gubernatorial candidate, the maximum the Republicans can hope for is a one- to two-seat increase. If Blanchard wins handily, Democrats could pick up one to three seats.

The magnitude and direction of the gubernatorial candidates' momentum, as well as voter turnout, may well determine the outcome of the closest legislative primary and general election races.

This commentary is a publication of the FISCAL AWARENESS SERVICE. We hope you have found it interesting, and as always, we welcome your comments.