

FISCAL AWARENESS SERVICE

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DR. GERALD FAVERMAN, Chairman of the Board

A LETTER OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL COMMENTARY

October 27, 1986

TO: FISCAL AWARENESS SERVICE Subscribers
FROM: Gerald A. Faverman, William R. Rustem, and Alan Harris
SUBJECT: THE 1986 MICHIGAN LEGISLATIVE ELECTION: KEY RACES

With only days to go until the general election, the reelection of Governor Jim Blanchard is virtually assured. It is most unlikely that Bill Lucas can catch this popular incumbent. Blanchard's lead is simply too large, time is too short, and the Lucas campaign has failed to capture the public imagination or interest.

The real question remaining in this election is how long Blanchard's coattails will be, if he has any. How many candidates can he help sweep into office? Can his margin of victory swing control of the state Senate to the Democrats? Can he increase the Democratic majority in the state House? And can he help bring about a sweep for the Democratic candidates for the educational boards?

There are two kinds of election landslides: personal and partisan. A personal landslide occurs when the nominee who heads the ticket receives a large vote, but races lower on the ballot are largely unaffected. Such was the case with the Nixon landslide of 1972. Nixon demolished Senator George McGovern, but Democrats managed to retain control of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

In contrast, a partisan landslide occurs when there is a significant shift by voters to embrace a particular party's philosophy, agenda, and candidates. The 1964 Johnson victory was such an event. In that election, Democrats also won two-thirds majorities in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and unprecedented victories in state and county races.

Until mid-October, the race for the Michigan governorship looked like it would be a personal landslide for Blanchard. Now, however, there are many signs that the governor may be able to transfer some of his strength to the rest of the Democratic slate.

It is quite possible that a Blanchard landslide on November 4 could mean a Democratic governor, secretary of state, and attorney general as well as state House and Senate. Michigan Democrats have not been in a similar situation since the election of 1936--a half-century ago.

As in all legislative elections, the results of only a handful of races across the state are in doubt. Since 1950, the average partisan shift in Senate elections has been two seats; in the House, only five seats. Except for the 1954, 1964, and 1966 elections, which were affected dramatically by reapportionment and the Romney/GOP landslide, the largest number of Senate seats changing hands was five; among the House campaigns, the largest was six.

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It is uncertain whether or not Blanchard's current popularity can carry the day for his party's candidates, allowing Democrats to extend their control of the House and wrest control of the Senate; but if a Democratic sweep occurs, it will shape Michigan's political future for the coming decade. What follows is our assessment of the key races in this election.

MICHIGAN SENATE

The Michigan Senate has become the real battleground in 1986. It is in the Senate that Republicans have the best chance to prevent a clean sweep by the Blanchard-led Democrats. From the perspective of the Democrats, the Senate is the last barrier to political supremacy.

Incumbent Facing Stiff Opposition

District 14--This Saginaw County district is the only Senate seat where the incumbent does not have a clear advantage. Senator Jerome Hart (D) faces a strong challenge, and the outcome is uncertain. Hart, hampered by a stroke he suffered several years ago, is in a heated battle with Saginaw school board president Ruth Braun (R). The Braun campaign has steered clear of directly mentioning Hart's health and has instead focused on "effectiveness." Meanwhile, the Hart campaign has endeavored to portray its candidate as "quietly effective." With both sides predicting victory and both parties pouring substantial human and financial resources into the race, this one will go right down to the wire.

Open Seats

In six state Senate districts, the incumbents (three Democrats and three Republicans) are not seeking reelection in 1986.

District 7--Retiring Senator Jim DeSana's (D) district is strongly Democratic. Christopher Dingell (D)--son of U.S. Congressman John Dingell--should have little trouble defeating Tom Krutsch (R). He will be the third-generation of Dingells to hold this downriver state Senate seat.

District 9--After knocking off incumbent Kirby Holmes (R) in the primary, State Representative Doug Carl (R) currently is leading Jim Ayres (D). In politically volatile Macomb County, however, any outcome is possible, and an exceptionally strong showing by Governor Blanchard could swing this race to the Democratic side. This is certainly one of the key races in 1986.

District 10--State Representative William Runco (R) is in a tight race against former state Senator George Hart (D) to succeed retiring Senator Patrick McCollough (D) of Dearborn. This contest is a real barn burner and the tide in the governor's race may help determine the winner. Both candidates are experienced campaigners and are running spirited campaigns. Although this is a Democratic district, Republicans view this race as an opportunity to increase their strength in the Senate. Runco is currently ahead, but is aware of the potential for a Blanchard tidal wave.

District 20--This race to succeed retiring Senator Harry DeMaso (R) will probably be the closest contest this fall. Battle Creek Mayor John Schwarz (R) is battling state Representative Richard Fitzpatrick (D). Always the maverick, Republican DeMaso has endorsed Democrat Fitzpatrick. Blanchard's

coattails could be a strong factor in this race, but in a region where ticket splitters are important, Schwarz could win by a whisker.

District 29--State Representative John Cherry (D) is well in front of Dale McMichael (R) in this historically Democratic Genesee County district. The seat is now held by retiring Senator Gary Corbin (D).

District 30--The voters in this mid-Michigan Republican district will likely elect state Representative Fred Dillingham (R) over Patricia McAvoy (D) to succeed Alan Cropsey (R), who did not seek reelection. Dillingham is a strong campaigner who has led a smart, effective election effort. McAvoy, nonetheless, came very close to winning in 1982, and some Democrats rate her capable of an upset if the governor does very well.

Possible Upsets

Although incumbents are always favored, upsets could occur in two districts.

District 8--Incumbent Rudy Nichols (R) faces Linda Ferrens (D) in what may be a closer race than primary results and pollsters forecast. The Democrats have targeted this northern Oakland County district as winnable and hope a strong showing by Governor Blanchard will help Ferrens unseat the incumbent. This is an emotional contest for Democrats; in 1982 the seat was won by Phil Mastin (D), who lost it in a Republican-led recall effort in 1983.

District 15--Incumbent Jack Faxon (D) is being challenged by Providence Hospital executive Frank Brock (R). Brock, who is also mayor pro tem of the Lathrup Village City Council, did unexpectedly well in the primary. The Republicans have targeted this district and, if Bill Lucas does better than anticipated in Oakland County, a most unlikely upset could occur.

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Incumbents Facing Stiff Opposition

District 66--Incumbent Gregory Gruse (R), the youngest member of the legislature, is being challenged in southern Oakland County by former state Representative Wilfred Webb (D) in a rematch of their 1984 contest. Only 234 votes separated the two candidates in 1984. Webb and the Democrats are confident they can unseat Gruse with Blanchard at the head of their ticket and Ronald Reagan not at the head of the Republican ticket. Gruse has worked hard for twenty-four months, however, and Republicans remain confident.

District 75--Incumbent George Furton (R) defeated former state Representative Ken DeBeaussaert (D) two years ago in a close contest; they are running against each other again. This Macomb County district is a potential Democratic opportunity that should be watched.

District 76--Incumbent Terry London (R) outstated James Docherty (D) in 1984. In the 1986 rematch, the Democrats have targeted this St. Clair district, but Republicans are defending it with vigor.

District 94--Incumbent Jelt Sietsema (D) of Wyoming is opposed by Ken Sikkema (R) in a race that many believe will be nine-term incumbent Sietsema's toughest battle yet. Sietsema, however, has consistently though narrowly won all earlier fights in this marginally Republican district.

District 72--Incumbent Robert Perakis (R) is in a heated Macomb County battle with Sharon Gire (D). Perakis defeated four-term Representative David Evans in 1984.

Open Seats

Eleven representatives (seven Republicans and four Democrats) are not seeking reelection to the state House of Representatives in 1986.

District 3--Ilona Varga (D), an aide to retiring Representative Matt McNeely of Detroit, will win this strongly Democratic seat in her race against Chester Calka (R).

District 26--Macomb County Commissioner Dave Jaye (R) is being opposed by Bill Browne (D) for the seat vacated by Doug Carl (R). Jaye could have trouble if Blanchard scores a landslide in the county.

District 31--This race pits Agnes Dobronski (D) against Marjorie Powell (R) for the seat now held by Representative Bill Runco (R). Democrats are strong in Dearborn and have targeted this seat, but Powell is running hard.

District 49--Ann Rosenbaum (D) is facing Bill Martin (R) in a contest for Richard Fitzpatrick's (D) seat that both parties would love to win. Rosenbaum is the beneficiary of high name recognition, but the Battle Creek area district is demographically Republican.

District 51--This seat will likely go to Susan Munsell (R) over Cecelia Gee (D). Both are from Livingston County. The district is strongly Republican, but Gee has run a strong campaign.

District 56--Rosemary DiPonio (D), who is running a clever campaign, will nevertheless lose to Frank Fitzgerald (R) in this Eaton County Republican stronghold.

District 79--This contest pits Bettye Lewis (R) against Nate Jonker (D). Jonker should win easily in Democratic Genesee County.

District 97--Although this western-Michigan district is slightly Democratic in make-up, Republican Ed Geerlings has held the seat since 1967. Debbie Farhat (D) and Nancy Crandall (R) are both campaigning hard, and this most interesting race is too close to call.

District 99--Molly Bopp (D) is facing Joanne Emmons (R). Both parties are confident. This close race of two Mecosta County residents will turn on Isabella County's choice.

District 100--Roland Jersevic (R) opposes Roland Niederstadt (D) in a close race. Vacated by the retirement of House Minority Leader Mike Busch of Saginaw, this is a Republican district; but Niederstadt could benefit from the expected strong showing by Governor Blanchard and strong name recognition.

District 110--Richard Sofio (D) should defeat Gene Clemans (R) in this strongly Democratic district in the western Upper Peninsula, although Clemans is waging a strong campaign.

Possible Upsets

District 21--Challenger James Schmitz (R) barely lost to Lynn Owen (D) in 1984. This downriver rematch could be another close contest, though Owen is favored.

District 74--This Macomb County district is one that the Republicans have targeted. Incumbent John Maynard (D) defeated Michael Scoglietti (R) two years ago by less than 1,000 votes, and the Republicans hope they can reverse the outcome this time. In volatile Macomb County, Republicans are still a minority party.

District 83--Incumbent Charles Mueller (R) is running for his sixth term against Kay Hart (D). Mueller should win; but if Blanchard does exceptionally well in Genesee County, Hart could score an upset.

District 109--Representative Jim Connors (R) is facing Stephen Branstrom (D) in this hotly contested race. Connors, who is well known in the district, won an upset in 1984 and is a Democratic target. However, the loss of the seat to the Democrats would require an exceptionally strong showing by Governor Blanchard in the Upper Peninsula.

CONCLUSION

The state House of Representatives will remain in Democratic hands for the next two years. Their current 57-53 majority affords them little security, and they are eager to expand that margin of control. If Blanchard scores as big a victory as some predict, Democrats could gain as many as six to eight seats or as few as two or three.

In the state Senate, the crucial battleground of this election, the Republicans' 20-18 majority is in jeopardy, and the gubernatorial outcome could be the deciding factor. In the final analysis, the balance of power between the GOP and the Democrats will be close; neither party will end up controlling the chamber by more than a 21-17 margin.

If the Democrats do gain control of the Senate, the Blanchard administration may be in for some surprises. Compared to state representatives, senators tend to be more independent, more ambitious, less cooperative, and less likely to follow party discipline. Their terms of office are twice as long as those of representatives and their constituencies almost three times as large. So even if Democrats gain a slim majority in the state Senate, look for this august body to remain independent and unpredictable.

It is quite possible that the 1986 Michigan election may go down in history as the election everyone forgot. Record low turnout is probable. While low turnout is generally regarded as favorable to the Republican party, this year there appears to be considerable apathy among Republican voters. Low turnout of Republicans could be devastating to Republican chances to do well and to maintain a base for 1988.

Attached to this letter is a list of all major party candidates for the legislature as they will appear on the November 4 ballot.

This commentary is a publication of the FISCAL AWARENESS SERVICE.

1986 MICHIGAN LEGISLATIVE RACES: DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES

SENATE

<u>Dist.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Dist.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
01	(D)	John Kelly*	20	(D)	Richard Fitzpatrick
01	(R)	John Lauve	20	(R)	John Schwarz
02	(D)	Basil Brown*	21	(D)	Charles Rodebaugh
02	(R)	Mitchell Lewandowski	21	(R)	Harmon Cropsey*
03	(D)	Jackie Vaughn III*	22	(D)	Evan LeDuc
03	(R)	Nora Hudson	22	(R)	Harry Gast*
04	(D)	David Holmes, Jr.*	23	(D)	Margaret Spreitzer
04	(R)	Latanya Matthews	23	(R)	Ed Fredricks*
05	(D)	Michael O'Brien*	24	(D)	Lingg Brewer
05	(R)	Esther Moreno	24	(R)	William Sederburg*
06	(D)	Thomas Healy	25	(D)	Joe Conroy*
06	(R)	Robert Geake*	25	(R)	Daniel Schon
07	(D)	Christopher Dingell	26	(D)	Gilbert DiNello*
07	(R)	Tom Krutsch			
08	(D)	Linda Ferrens	27	(D)	Arthur Miller, Jr.*
08	(R)	Rudy Nichols*	27	(R)	Michael Pal
09	(D)	Jim Ayres	28	(D)	James Green
09	(R)	Doug Carl	28	(R)	Dan DeGrow*
10	(D)	George Hart	29	(D)	John Cherry, Jr.*
10	(R)	William Runco	29	(R)	Dale McMichael
11	(D)	Bernard Margolis	30	(D)	Patricia McAvoy
11	(R)	Norman Shinkle*	30	(R)	Frederick Dillingham
12	(D)	William Faust*	31	(D)	Diane Siciliano
12	(R)	Matt Bell	31	(R)	Dick Posthumus*
13	(D)	Paul Denenfeld	32	(D)	Glenn Barkan
13	(R)	Jack Welborn*	32	(R)	Vernon Ehlers*
14	(D)	Jerome Hart*	33	(D)	Dale Williams
14	(R)	Ruth Braun	33	(R)	Phil Arthurhultz*
15	(D)	Jack Faxon*	34	(D)	James Barcia*
15	(R)	Frank Brock			
16	(D)	Martha Kinney	35	(D)	Gerald White
16	(R)	Doug Cruce*	35	(R)	John Engler*
17	(D)	Martha Blom	36	(D)	Joseph Elliott
17	(R)	Richard Fessler*	36	(R)	Connie Binsfeld*
18	(D)	Lana Pollack*	37	(D)	Mitch Irwin*
18	(R)	Dale Apley, Jr.	37	(R)	John Knorr
19	(D)	Bill Goff	38	(D)	Joseph Mack*
19	(R)	Nick Smith*	38	(R)	Peter Koski

*Denotes incumbent.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

<u>Dist.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Dist.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
01	(D)	Michael Bennane*	19	(D)	Dan Reardon
01	(R)	Shirley Vincent	19	(R)	Donald Van Singel*
02	(D)	Burton Leland*	20	(D)	Dale Morris
02	(R)	Dennis Polidori	20	(R)	Claude Trim*
03	(D)	Ilona Varga	21	(D)	Lynn Owen*
03	(R)	Chester Calka	21	(R)	James Schmitz
04	(D)	Alma Stallworth*	22	(D)	Gary Owen*
04	(R)	JoAnn Roberts	22	(R)	Steven Darr
05	(D)	Teola Hunter*	23	(D)	Jim Pedersen
05	(R)	Jessie Mae Johnson	23	(R)	Philip Hoffman*
06	(D)	Morris Hood, Jr.*	24	(D)	Marsha Eisenberg
06	(R)	Stephanie Jackson	24	(R)	David Honigman*
07	(D)	Nelson Saunders*	25	(D)	Dennis Dutko*
07	(R)	Dorothea Marshall	25	(R)	Don Blevins
08	(D)	Carolyn Kilpatrick*	26	(D)	William Browne
08	(R)	Kirkland Blakely	26	(R)	David Jaye
09	(D)	Ethel Terrell*	27	(D)	Vincent Porreca*
09	(R)	Kevin Hammons	27	(R)	Mel Kaplani
10	(D)	Virgil Smith, Jr.*	28	(D)	Robert DeMars*
10	(R)	David Leach	28	(R)	William LeVan
11	(D)	Stanley Stopczynski*	29	(D)	Rick Sitz*
11	(R)	Robert Pendergast	29	(R)	Roger Paull
12	(D)	Curtis Hertel*	30	(D)	Joe Palamara*
			30	(R)	Lee Wenskay
13	(D)	Nancy Resowski	31	(D)	Agnes Dobronski
13	(R)	William Bryant, Jr.*	31	(R)	Marjorie Powell
14	(D)	Joseph Young, Sr.*	32	(D)	Richard Young*
14	(R)	Judy Askew	32	(R)	Ken Reese
15	(D)	Joseph Young, Jr.*	33	(D)	William Keith*
15	(R)	Chester Williams	33	(R)	Edward Mellas
16	(D)	Juanita Watkins*	34	(D)	John Bennett*
16	(R)	Bobby Brown	34	(R)	Andy Anuzis
17	(D)	Raymond Murphy*	35	(D)	Anthony Shannon, Jr.
17	(R)	Dorothy Patterson	35	(R)	Lyn Bankes*
18	(D)	Mathias Forbes	36	(D)	Kathy Reilly
18	(R)	Sidney Owinga*	36	(R)	Gerald Law*

*Denotes incumbent.

<u>Dist.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
37	(D)	James Kosteva*
37	(R)	Theodore Jacques
38	(D)	Justine Barns*
38	(R)	George Erdei
39	(D)	Jerry Bartnik*
39	(R)	Peter Gillespie
40	(R)	Timothy Walberg*
41	(D)	Robert VanArsdalen
41	(R)	Michael Nye*
42	(D)	Leah Brazo
42	(R)	Glenn Oxender*
43	(D)	Forrest Perkins
43	(R)	Carl Gnodtke*
44	(D)	James Boothby
44	(R)	Lad Stacey*
45	(D)	Timmy Montgomery
45	(R)	James Middaugh*
46	(D)	Mary Brown*
46	(R)	Randy Mason
47	(D)	Michael Slaughter
47	(R)	Paul Wartner*
48	(D)	Marty McDermott
48	(R)	Donald Gilmer*
49	(D)	Ann Rosenbaum
49	(R)	William Martin
50	(D)	Michael Griffin*
50	(R)	Elmer Curl
51	(D)	Cecelia Gee
51	(R)	Susan Munsell
52	(D)	Donald Shelton
52	(R)	Margaret O'Connor*
53	(D)	Perry Bullard*
53	(R)	Victor Holtz
54	(D)	Walter Garrett
54	(R)	Paul Hillemonds*

<u>Dist.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
55	(D)	Dolores Hall
55	(R)	William Van Regenmorter*
56	(D)	Rosemary DiPonio
56	(R)	Frank Fitzgerald
57	(D)	David Hollister*
57	(R)	Richard Swanson
58	(D)	Debbie Stabenow*
58	(R)	Bill Cady
59	(D)	Lynn Jondahl*
59	(R)	Wayne Wudyka
60	(D)	Marshall Spinner
60	(R)	Willis Bullard, Jr.*
61	(D)	Greg Young
61	(R)	Mat Dunaskiss*
62	(D)	Charlie Harrison, Jr.*
62	(R)	Terri Adams
63	(D)	Vicki Kremm
63	(R)	Gordon Sparks*
64	(D)	Maxine Berman*
64	(R)	Sheila Molnar
65	(D)	Joan Hill
65	(R)	Judith Miller*
66	(D)	Wilfred Webb
66	(R)	Gregory Gruse*
67	(D)	David Gubow*
67	(R)	Lowell Ruppenthal
68	(D)	Donald Morse
68	(R)	Shirley Johnson*
69	(D)	Michael Breshgold
69	(R)	Wilbur Brotherton*
70	(D)	Lloyd Weeks*
71	(D)	Sal Rocca*
71	(R)	Chester Rudnicki
72	(D)	Sharon Gire
72	(R)	Robert Perakis*

*Denotes incumbent.

<u>Dist.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
73	(D)	Nick Ciaramitaro*
73	(R)	Joseph Steinmetz
74	(D)	John Maynard*
74	(R)	Michael Scoglietti
75	(D)	Kenneth DeBeaussaert
75	(R)	George Furton*
76	(D)	James Docherty
76	(R)	Terry London*
77	(D)	Dick Erla
77	(R)	Dick Allen*
78	(D)	Derwin Rushing
78	(R)	Keith Muxlow*
79	(D)	Nate Jonker
79	(R)	Bettye Lewis
80	(D)	Floyd Clack*
80	(R)	Anna Marie Severson
81	(D)	Robert Emerson*
81	(R)	Jacqueline Coons
82	(D)	Thomas Scott*
82	(R)	Dean Bagnall
83	(D)	Kay Hart
83	(R)	Charles Mueller*
84	(D)	Sheila Field
84	(R)	John Strand*
85	(D)	James O'Neill, Jr.*
85	(R)	William Loveless
86	(D)	Lewis Dodak*
86	(R)	Amy Jo Deal
87	(D)	Francis Spaniola*
87	(R)	Michael Gregoricka
88	(D)	Mike LaVean
88	(R)	Robert Bender*
89	(D)	Lawrence Hollenbeck
89	(R)	Gary Randall*
90	(D)	Bernie Hale
90	(R)	Victor Krause*
91	(D)	Donald Crandall
91	(R)	Walter DeLange*

<u>Dist.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
92	(D)	Thomas Mathieu*
92	(R)	Mary Milanowski
93	(D)	Paul Mayhue
93	(R)	Richard Bandstra*
94	(D)	Jelt Sietsema*
94	(R)	Ken Sikkema
95	(D)	Frances Johnson
95	(R)	Alvin Hoekman*
96	(D)	Paul Stark
96	(R)	Mickey Knight*
97	(D)	Debbie Farhat
97	(R)	Nancy Crandall
98	(D)	Carolyn Diem
98	(R)	Ed Giese*
99	(D)	Molly Bopp
99	(R)	Joanne Emmons
100	(D)	Roland Niederstadt
100	(R)	Roland Jersevic
101	(D)	Thomas Hickner*
101	(R)	Clair White
102	(D)	Leo Foley
102	(R)	Michael Hayes*
103	(D)	Ellen Addington
103	(R)	Ralph Ostling*
104	(D)	Evangeline Stanchik
104	(R)	Thomas Power*
105	(D)	Tom Alley*
105	(R)	Michelle Morris
106	(D)	Marie Twite
106	(R)	John Pridnia*
107	(D)	Pat Gagliardi*
107	(R)	Peter Costa
108	(D)	Dominic Jacobetti*
108	(R)	John Drennan
109	(D)	Stephen Branstrom
109	(R)	Jim Connors*
110	(D)	Richard Sofio
110	(R)	Gene Clemans

*Denotes Incumbent.