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To: MCA
From: Noah Smith
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Re: Legislative update

2010 Elections

With the Primary election having passed and each major political party having had its convention to select the top-of-the-ticket candidates, the field for November's election is clear.

Unless one has been on an extended vacation, Republican candidate Rick Snyder of Ann Arbor, the former CEO of Gateway computers, is facing-off against Virg Bernero, the Democratic Mayor of Lansing. Snyder has selected State Representative Brian Calley (R – Portland) as his running mate, and Bernero has selected Southfield Mayor Brenda Lawrence. Calley, while not widely known, is known for his reasonable temperament, conservative credentials to help assuage fellow conservatives nervous about Snyder's more moderate stances, and his ability to work a compromise (Calley ended up voting for the Michigan Business Tax recently, but only after working a compromise that won the Chamber of Commerce over). Lawrence is the first woman and the first African-American woman to be elected as the mayor of Southfield, and ran unsuccessfully in 2008 against L. Brooks Patterson for Oakland County Executive.

The Republicans have selected Bill Schuette, a retired State Appellate Court judge and former State Senator from Midland, to be their Attorney General candidate. He beat State Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R – Rochester) by a slim margin at the recent convention. He will face Democratic choice David Leighton, the Genesee County Prosecutor, who edged-out notable plaintiff attorney Richard Bernstein by an equally slim margin (each party candidate by a slim near-100 votes).

For Secretary of State, Wayne State University Professor, published author and former Southern Poverty Law Center voting rights attorney Jocelyn Benson bested Detroit City Clerk Janice Winfrey by a massive margin in the Democratic convention a few months ago. Benson will face the widely-acclaimed Oakland County Clerk Ruth Johnson, also a former Republican State Representative, in November. This battle will be interesting to watch as Benson is a supporter of no-reason absentee voting, early voting and the removal of other obstacles to higher voter turnout, and Johnson is diametrically opposed to those issues and sees them as ripe for voter fraud. Johnson also helped scoop the recent effort to create an actual Tea Party to run in November as a possible fraudulent act by some Oakland County Democrats. The fake-or-not Tea Party has appealed to the Supreme Court, who agreed with the Board of Canvassers: they cannot be on the ballot.

See more about the Supreme Court in an article below.

Roughly 50% of the Democratically-held House of Representatives is going to turn-over this November due to term limits. Conventional wisdom keeps Dems in control of that chamber, but cutting their current 16-seat majority nearly in half. 29 of Michigan's 38 State Senators are also term-limited, and the Senate could be the chamber to watch this Fall. If Dems pick-up 3 seats, in addition to keeping those