

Post-Election Report

November 20, 2022

By Mary Pollock, AAUWMI Government Relations Coordinator

November 8 brought a sea change to Michigan in the form of an unexpected blue wave rather than a forecasted red tsunami. By unofficial counts, there was a record turn-out for Michigan's midterm election on November 8, 2022 - 4,485,779 voters or 54.5% of registered voters. Nearly 60% of Michigan voters cast an absentee ballot in the 2020 statewide general election, compared to about 40% on November 8.

Political pundits credit redistricting, the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision repealing national abortion law, the economy, and the quality of candidates as the most important factors in high turnout this cycle.

BLUE "ALL-FECTA"

Democrats took all top statewide executive positions in Michigan, flipped both chambers of the legislature from the GOP to Democratic control, swept all four education boards to continue Democratic majorities on each of them, retained a 4-3 majority of Democratic Party nominees on the Michigan Supreme Court, and will be the majority of Michigan's delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives. Additionally, women will be the majority in the Democratic Caucuses of both legislative chambers.

- Governor Gretchen Whitmer was re-elected by 10.5 points over her nearest competitor, Republican Tudor Dixon. No Democratic Governor in Michigan had won with a Democrat in the White House since 1950.
- Attorney General Dana Nessel was re-elected over Republican Matt DePerno by 8.6 points.
- Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson was re-elected by 13.9 points over Republican Kristina Karamo.
- Democratic Party-nominated incumbent Supreme Court Justice Richard Bernstein was re-elected with 33.9% of the vote and Republican Party-nominated incumbent Supreme Court Justice Brian Zahra won the other seat with 23.8% of the vote. Trailing was Democratic Party-nominated candidate and current State Representative Kyra Bolden with 21.9% of the vote.

STATE LEGISLATURE

State Senate – For the first time since the 1982 election, Democrats will have the majority in the Michigan Senate with a 20-18 margin. Democrat Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist is also available to break ties. Statewide, Democratic Senate candidates won the votes of 50.7% of the electorate. In the Democratic Senate Caucus there will be 12 women and 8 men (including 3 African-American women, one Asian woman, and one Asian man). The Senate Republican Caucus is composed of 3 women and 15 men, all white.

In Michigan Senate races, Republican Senator Mark Huizinga held off a challenge from Representative David LaGrand in Kent County, and former Republican Representative Michael Webber narrowly defeated Democratic Representative Padma Kuppa to win the 9th District Senate seat in Oakland County. Incumbent Republican Senator Jon Bumstead also defeated Representative Terry Sabo to hold his seat in the Muskegon area.

Most of the other hotly contested Senate races swung to Democrats, however. Representative Kevin Hertel defeated Representative Pamela Hornberger in the 12th Senate District in Macomb County; Representative Darrin Camilleri defeated Houston James in the 4th Senate District in Wayne County; Bay City Commissioner Kristen McDonald-Rivet won over Representative Annette Glenn in the 35th District in the Bay-Midland-Saginaw area; and Washtenaw County Commissioner Sue Shink defeated Republican Tim Golding in a Washtenaw/Jackson County district. The last race to be called was a close battle between incumbent Republican Michael MacDonald and Macomb County Commissioner Veronica Klinefelt in southern Macomb County. At around 7:30 a.m. on November 9, the race was called for Klinefelt, assuring a 20-18 Democratic majority for the next Senate session.

- Senate Majority Leader will be Senator Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids), the first woman to serve in that role in state history.
- Majority President Pro Tempore (running the rostrum) will be Senator Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), the first member of the LGBT community to serve in the role in state history.
- Majority Floor Leader will be Senator-elect Sam Singh (D-East Lansing), the first American of Indian descent elected to the Senate.
- Senate Appropriations Committee Chair will be Senator-elect Sara Anthony (D-Lansing), the first African-American to hold the position.
- Senate Minority Leader will be Senator Aric Nesbitt (R-Porter Township).
- Senate Minority Floor Leader will be Senator Dan Lauwers (R-Brockway)

State House - For the first time since 2012, Democrats will have the majority in the Michigan House with a slim 56-54 advantage. Statewide, House Democrats won the votes of 50.6% of the electorate. There will be 31 women and 25 men among the House Democrats and 12 women and 42 men in the Republican House Caucus beginning in 2023.

Democrats saw gains in Grand Rapids, Traverse City and the southwest Michigan lakeshore and held onto seats in Battle Creek, Eaton County and Oakland County that had been tagged as competitive districts. The last race to be called in the Michigan House was the defeat of incumbent Representative Alex Garza (D-Taylor) by challenger James DeSana, declared the winner Wednesday afternoon.

- Speaker of the House will be Representative **Joe Tate** (D-Detroit), the first African-American Speaker of the House in state history.

- Speaker Pro Tempore handling the rostrum will be Representative Laurie Pohutsky (D-Livonia), the first openly bisexual woman to serve as Speaker Pro Tempore.
- Majority Floor Leader will be Representative Abraham Aiyash (D-Hamtramck), the first Muslim to serve in this role.
- House Appropriations Committee Chair will be Representative Angela Witwer (D-Grand Ledge).
- House Minority Leader will be Representative Matt Hall (R-Comstock Township)
- House Minority Floor Leader will be Bryan Posthumus (R-Cannon Township).

PROSPECTS FOR AAUW POLICY PRIORITIES

Prospects are good for consideration of some of AAUW's Public Policy Priorities given a different majority in the Michigan legislature than in the past 12 years. Hopefully, some education sex equity measures and economic security issues for women will get hearings if not bills introduced, passed and signed into law. Our long-sought pay equity bill package may move! Can paid parent leave and paid sick leave mandates on employers be passed? Will expanded, high quality, subsidized childcare options and universal pre-K become a reality for all?

Bills to end reproductive rights restrictions conflicting with Proposal 3 need much review and attention. Ending child marriage may get a better chance in the new legislature. Inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in Michigan civil rights law surely will be adopted. Expansion of sensible gun safety legislation is needed.

Temper this wish list with the knowledge of huge pent-up demand from many Democratic constituency groups for action from the new legislature and this second-term Governor. Stay tuned to an exciting four years ahead of us by "friending" AAUWMI Lobby Corps Facebook page and sign up for the Virtual Lobby Corps monthly meetings by sending an email request to pollockm@comcast.net.

BALLOT PROPOSALS

All three statewide ballot proposals amending the state constitution passed handily. AAUW of Michigan endorsed and worked for passage of Proposals 2 and 3. Ballot proposals amending the Michigan Constitution go into effect 45 days after election day (December 23).

- Proposal 22-1 Voters for Transparency and Term Limits won by 32.6 points.
- Proposal 22-2 Promote the Vote won by 20 points.
- Proposal 22-3 Reproductive Freedom for All won by 13.3 points.

Voters in California and Vermont also approved constitutional amendments that establish rights to reproductive freedom. Meanwhile, an amendment that would have restricted abortion access rights in Kentucky and a legislative referendum in Montana on medical care for infants "born alive" after abortion failed by wide margins. These results are in addition to the earlier Kansas vote rejecting an anti-abortion constitutional

measure. In Nevada, the incumbent governor lost to a challenger who favors abortion restrictions. That may lead to a repeal of the state's executive order protecting women from prosecution for seeking an abortion. In addition, Republicans in Nebraska seem to have secured a filibuster-proof majority in the state's unicameral legislature, opening the door for a stalled 12-week ban on abortion to pass in the next session.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

Michigan's Congressional delegation will be 7-6 in favor of Democrats starting in 2023. Each major party picked up one of the two open Congressional seats in Michigan, Democratic incumbents in two tight districts were re-elected, and all other incumbents were re-elected.

- Democrat Hilary Scholten of Grand Rapids took CD 3 by 12.9 points over Republican John Gibbs. Gibbs had earlier defeated incumbent Republican Peter Meijer in the primary.
- Republican John James of Bloomfield Hills won CD 10 over Democrat Carl Marlinga by 1601 votes - .59 points. Libertarian and Working Class party candidates had a combined 9,429 for 2.89% of the vote.
- Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin (D-Lansing) was re-elected over current State Senator Tom Barrett (R-Grand Ledge) by 5.29 points.
- Congressman Dan Kildee was re-elected over Republican Paul Junge by 10.27 points.

WOMEN, MINORITY, AND YOUTH VOTING

According to CNN's early exit polling, women and voters of color shifted toward the GOP this cycle. Republicans won a majority of White women, an important voting bloc the two parties split in 2018. Republicans also performed better among Latino voters than they did four years ago. Democrats' support among Latino men was 63% in 2018 and is under 55% in 2022, according to the early exit polls. Republicans appeared to cut into Democrats' advantage among Latino women, although Democrats still got the support of about two-thirds of them.

Youth vote - Nearly 30 percent of young adults between the ages 18 and 29 are estimated to have voted in the 2022 midterm elections, marking the second-highest youth turnout in three decades according to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, a research organization through Tufts University. An indication of young voter enthusiasm is that at Michigan State University, 1,434 students registered to vote on Election Day, which was a record for East Lansing. University of Michigan also had nearly 1,500 new registered voters on November 8. Students in those two locations waited up to 5 hours to vote!

In a pre-election survey conducted by CIRCLE of these age-group voters, out of five possible options given (abortion, crime, inflation, immigration, and gun policy), 44% selected abortion as the most important issue in deciding their vote and 21% cited

inflation. Notably, for every other age group, those priorities were reversed: inflation first, and abortion second. According to CIRCLE, 62% of Michigan's youth vote went to Whitmer and 36% of the youth vote went to Republican Tudor Dixon.

NATIONAL RESULTS

Governors - A record-setting 12 women (24%) will serve as Governors beginning in 2023, three more than the current record of 9. Four are Republicans. There are 92 (29.7%) women serving in statewide elective executive office (including governor) positions in the United States.

State legislators - With nearly 9 percent of state legislative races still undecided at this writing, 2,241 (30.4%) state legislators will be women after the new year.

Congress - In Congress, there will likely remain 123 women in the U.S. House (90 Democrats, 33 Republicans) and 24 women (16 Democrats and 8 Republicans) in the U.S. Senate. There was no record increase in this election cycle.

Of these Congressional women, 10 are Asian-American, 27 are Black, 19 are Hispanic, one is Middle Eastern, one is Native American/Hawaiian Native, and 94 are White.

LAME DUCK SESSION

Michigan's lame duck session is expected to be mostly farewell speeches rather than any heavy policy action considering the change in control of the Michigan legislature. A supplemental appropriation is scheduled for consideration but there may be only a few days of session after Thanksgiving and before the end of December.

POST-ELECTION PROCESSES

County Board of Canvassers - Each county's Board of Canvassers composed of two Democrats and two Republicans is required to review and certify the election results from the city and township clerks within their county. Three of the four Board members must certify the results. Election results must be forwarded by November 23 to the Michigan Secretary of State, Bureau of Elections. If a county board of canvassers cannot certify the results in time or deadlocks, they must turn their work over to the Bureau of Elections, which will have to finish reviewing the results within 10 days of receiving the county results.

Candidates for local positions certified by the county Board of Canvassers may request a recount within 6 days after county certification. Recounts are supervised by the Secretary of State, Bureau of Elections. Recounts must be completed within 30 days.

The Bureau of Elections collects the county election results, reviews them, helps counties with error problems, and makes a recommendation for the Michigan Board of

State Canvassers. The Bureau intervenes in those cases where a county Board of Canvassers does not certify election results.

Board of State Canvassers – The Michigan Board of State Canvassers is appointed by the Governor with consent of the Michigan Senate from recommendations made by the two major parties. There are two Republicans and two Democrats on the Board who serve four-year terms. The Board meets 20 days after the election (November 28) to act on the Bureau of Elections recommendations regarding certification of county election results.

Three of the four Board members need to vote Yes to certify the election. The Michigan Supreme Court ruled in September the Board of State Canvassers has only “ministerial” duties and cannot adjudicate legal disputes if they arise. If the Board fails to certify, the Secretary of State, Bureau of Elections will seek Michigan Supreme Court intervention.

Candidates for positions certified by the Michigan Board of State Canvassers may request a recount within 48 hours after state certification.

INAUGURATION

Statewide elected officials will be inaugurated at noon on January 1, 2023. The Legislative schedule for 2023 including swearing in ceremonies has not yet been announced.