

# Second Terms May Be Tough for First-Timers Granholm, Stabenow

Democrats Governor Jennifer Granholm and U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow won office by narrow margins and face tough bids this year for second terms as the first women to hold those offices.

Stabenow is in better shape than Granholm – at least for now – but each gets less than 50 percent in latest polling against Republicans.

Granholm won in 2002 with 51 percent of the vote over Lieutenant Governor Dick Posthumus, who carried six of the Upper Peninsula's 15 counties and 18 of the 21 counties north of Clare.

Stabenow won in 2000 with 49 percent over Senator Spencer Abraham, who carried 12 counties above the bridge and 20 in the northern lower.

Early last week, a Detroit News/WXYZ-TV poll of 600 likely voters by EPIC/MRA gave DeVos his first substantial lead over Granholm – 48 percent to 40 percent, with 12 percent undecided. In smaller sub-samples, he led 62-26 in the northern lower; she led 68-32 in the U.P.

On Saturday, EPIC/MRA said the poll also gave Stabenow a 49-33 lead over Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard, including 68-9 in the U.P. He led 45-38 in the northern lower.

Some perspectives beyond the early poll numbers:

• Apart from Michigan's lagging economy that likely will burden Granholm in the coming months, the DeVos surge was propelled by his massive TV advertising. The poll, conducted June 5 to 9, did not reflect impact of the effective pro-Granholm TV ads in all Michigan markets that started June 8 by the Michigan Democratic Party.

The Democrat buy was far more modest than the DeVos buy, but, according to party

## Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



spokesman Jason Moon, "just a first shot." Furthermore, Granholm herself will spend heavily on TV once she is convinced voters are tuned in – although her war chest will not match that of DeVos.

• As is often the case early in a Senate race, there is less voter and media attention to Stabenow's reelection effort than Granholm's. There's not yet a Republican bigfoot on the Senate trail.

The Stabenow-Bouchard poll did not reflect current dynamics in what started out as a three-candidate Republican primary. While Bouchard is seen as the frontrunner, the Reverend Keith Butler, a former Detroit councilman, remains in the race.

The Reverend Jerry Zandstra, on leave from a Grand Rapids think tank, failed to get enough signatures to qualify for the ballot and told the Republican State Committee Saturday he will not run as an independent. He won't endorse the "evenly matched" Bouchard or Butler, at this time, but vowed to "do everything I can to strengthen both candidates."

### Power Outage?

For decades, Michigan has ranked at or near the bottom in getting returns on tax dollars sent to Washington.

Yet *Roll Call*, the Capitol Hill newspaper, ranks Michigan's current congressional delegation the sixth strongest in the 109th

Congress, and has rated Michigan among the top 10 "most powerful" every year since it began its biennial assessment in 1989-90.

Now comes *Inside Michigan Politics* (IMP) newsletter with word that Knowlegis, which it describes as a Virginia-based non-partisan government relations management firm, ranks the Michigan delegation 27th among the 50 states in effectiveness.

Under the headline "Stabenow's effectiveness minimal," IMP said Knowlegis' "power rating" ranks Stabenow "a lowly 95th" among all senators.

Stabenow Communications Director Angela Benander said the Knowlegis ranking "is heavily weighted against freshmen in the minority." She said it appears to ignore Stabenow's "important successes" on tax cuts for manufacturers who create domestic jobs rather than overseas; and on Great Lakes, health and agricultural issues, as well as against dumping of Canadian trash in Michigan.

I, too, find the rankings suspect. For example, Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) gets the worst rating of the Michigan delegation, and is ranked 299th in the House. Yet he has been effective on such issues as border security, and his language on Great Lakes and some other issues has been embraced in bills that passed under the names of others.

(Northern Michigan's other congressmen fared better. Representative Pete Hoekstra (R-Holland) was No. 2 among the state's 15 House members, and 63rd in the chamber. Representative Dave Camp (R-Midland) was eighth in the delegation, and 133rd in the House.)

The Knowlegis study will be fodder for Republicans as they push their "Do-Nothing Debbie" theme. (In 2000, she was dubbed "Liberal Debbie.")

The National Republican Senatorial Committee has made Stabenow, who has the No. 3 leadership position in the Democratic caucus, a prime target. In latest of several attacks on her, NRSC spokesman Brian Walton said, "Her claim to be 'leading efforts to make health care more affordable for Michigan families' is laughable."

The *National Journal* says Stabenow might end up in a tough race, "depending on a variety of factors such as fundraising and the GOP challenger."

Both sides will have plenty of money, much of it from afar. Unlike in the gubernatorial race, the GOP challenger is yet to be determined.

### The Sno-Mo Vote

Given her political problems in northern lower Michigan, Granholm was wise to embrace last week's decision of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to remove the eight-year motorized traffic restriction from the Mullett Lake portion of the Cheboygan-to-Gaylord trail.

Her earlier veto of legislation that would have satisfied snow-mobilers prompted an effective mounting of pressure by the Michigan Snowmobile Association, business and community leaders, and Senators Jason Allen (R- Traverse City) and Tony Stamas (R-Midland), and Representative Kevin Elsenheimer (R-Bellaire).

Granholm said the action, sure to be ratified by Department of Natural Resources, "could provide an economic boost to this area."

And maybe to her reelection prospects in the area.

*George Weeks recently retired after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.*

## Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

I want to let you know how much we love receiving the *Town Crier*. My husband and I have been visitors to the Island for over 25 years. We visit every year on our anniversary. We will be staying at the Lake View Hotel June 23 through June 26.

Thank you for offering the *Town Crier* to out-of-state persons. Keeps Mackinac Island in our thoughts year-around.

Margie Parker  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

## Family Rescued Near Round Island

A man and his dog were back safe on Mackinac Island after becoming stranded on Round Island, and his wife and daughter were rescued as their small boat drifted out into the Straits of Mackinac Saturday, June 10, following a family outing.

The excitement began as the family left Round Island in a small inflatable boat and their dog jumped overboard. The man jumped into the water after

### Daniels Is \$5,000 Raffle Winner

The Lilac Festival raffle, held at the Village Inn after the Grand Parade on Sunday, June 18, concluded the Island-wide celebration. Mary Beth Daniels of Grand Hotel won the \$5,000 first prize, Grace Irish won the \$3,000 second prize, and Fritz George of Wawashkamo Golf Links and his friend, Ray Moss in Florida, split the \$2,000 third prize.

### For The Record...

In last week's story, "Concert Series Will Feature Classical Music," an event was omitted. It should have stated that Peggy Bynoe will be performing a piano recital on August 6.

the dog, leaving his wife and daughter in the boat.

They did not know how to operate the boat and it drifted out into the Straits of Mackinac, while the man and dog made for dry ground on Round Island.

The Mackinac County Sheriff's Department marine patrol was in the vicinity and was able to pull alongside the drifting rubber boat and take the wife and daughter to Mackinac Island.

Shallow water at Round Island prevented the Sheriff's Department or a Coast Guard

Auxiliary boat from St. Ignace from picking up the man and his dog, so the Mackinac Island Fire Department was dispatched with its inflatable boat for the rescue.

The boat was manned by Jason St. Onge and Dan Wightman.

The incident underscores the danger of small boats on the Great Lakes.

"The inflatable shouldn't have been out in that kind of weather. It was too choppy," said Boatswain Mate Third Class Miranda Yarger from Coast Guard Station St. Ignace.

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