



Friday, September 11, 2009

MANAGEMENT

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Centerpiece

Rep. Tim Moore (R-Farwell) is a third-term House member who has the distinction of being the Republican who represents the most Democratic House district, based on the biennial base numbers.

After knocking off a Democratic incumbent in 2004, Moore has won re-election by large numbers in his 97th House district, which makes up Clare, Gladwin, and Arenac Counties and parts of Bay County.

Moore recently shared his observations about the budget impasse and his future political ambitions. The following is an excerpt of that discussion.

Q. Talk about what you're seeing with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 budget. Long caucus meetings, not a lot of information being shared on the House side -- does it remind you of 2007?

A. It's unfortunate. It reminds me a lot of '07. The big plan then was that we were going to fix our structural problem in Lansing by raising \$1.5 billion, and in future budgets we'd never have to worry about it.

Here we are, a couple years later, \$1 billion short, and it didn't fix anything because we didn't look at the core problem, which is state spending. We have to get that in line.

Q. There are some revenue proposals out there that are designed to modernize our tax structure -- expanding the sales tax to certain services -- are there certain things you'd be willing to expand the sales tax to?

A. I'm willing to take part in that discussion once we talk about what we're willing to reform here in Lansing. I think that by talking about the revenue side before you talk about the reform side is foolish. You need to do the reforms first before you can find out where you are at the end of the day and how much additional revenue you may or may not need.

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Q. You are not on the Appropriations Committee; do you feel like your caucus has kept you up to date on the budget and what the options are?

A. Yes, I think our caucus leaders have done a real good job keeping us informed as much as they can. When you're in the minority, you're not on the front line in all of the decisions, but I think they've done a real good job.

Q. Your name has been mentioned as a potential candidate for the 35th Senate district seat. Where are you in your decision-making process?

A. We wanted to make sure we took a long time to think about it and make sure we're in it 100 percent. We spent a lot of time with our kids this summer and really enjoyed our summer. But, we've made a decision. We're starting to go at it 110 percent. We're looking forward to it.

I'll get to meet 10 new additional counties, 11 total, but it's all really good people so we're really excited about it. I'm the only House district that has three different Senators. In Clare County, where I live, we have Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau). In Gladwin County, I have Sen. Tony Stamas (R-Midland) and in Arenac and Bay Counties, I have Sen. Jim Barcia (D-Bay City).

So some would say that's a disadvantage. I'm looking at it from the standpoint that it's a 55 percent Democratic seat and we won with 61 percent of the vote. Now I'm going to what some say is a 56 to 58 percent Republican seat, so it will be more of a primary challenge, so I'm looking forward to that change. I like to campaign. I like to knock doors.

GCSEye On The Capitol

Speaker Nixes Independent Run Idea

Rumors have been swirling for weeks that House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.) could well enter the 2010 governor's race as an independent candidate.

In an interview on public television's *Off The Record* Dillon put those rumors to rest. He noted that if he did opt to run against Lt. Gov. John Cherry for the Democratic nomination he wouldn't run a compare and contrast campaign.

"I have enough of my own issues to run on," he said.

House Dems Would Tax Cell Phones, Bottled Water

As the state's budget clock continues to wind down toward Oct. 1 and state leaders still have no budget plan in hand, proposals continue to surface.

On Wednesday aspects of the House Democrats' plan bubbled to the surface, and it includes higher taxes on bottle water, cellular telephones, satellite television and fast food.

Under the revenue enhancement plan championed by House Appropriations Committee Chair George Cushingberry (D-Detroit), a 5 percent increase on satellite TV would generate \$40 million, a 50-cent-per-month charge on cell phones would bring in \$53.4 million and a new two-percent excise tax on fast food would generate \$69.4 million.

Also, like the Governor, the House Democrats are looking at taxing bottled water, only their plan adds a 5-cent tax on bottled water, which is estimated to generate \$89 million.

The plan also trims a variety of tax exemptions by 12.5 percent and delays the planned implementation of the earned income tax credit increase for another year. Another idea is to create a 1.8 percent surcharge on private health insurance claims as a way to prevent \$329 million in cuts to Medicaid.

Effort To Recall Detroit Lawmaker Suffers Setback

An effort to recall freshman Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Detroit) suffered a setback after the Wayne County Elections Commission tossed out the recall petition filed by political consultant Adolph Mongo.

The panel held that the language filed in all three recall petitions was unclear. The recall is due to Tlaib's position on two competing international bridge proposals in her district -- one being pushed by the Ambassador Bridge folks and a publicly funded venture. Among Mongo's clients is the Detroit International Bridge Company (DIBC), but Mongo insists that bridge officials are not behind his recall effort.

Mongo reiterated again today that Tlaib must "deal with the real problems in the district -- crime, urban renewal and the bridge."

Detroit CEO Group Makes Efforts Statewide

Detroit Renaissance expanded its mission this week to include the entire state - arguing that without reform in Lansing, renaissance in Detroit is impossible.

The organization will be changing its name to Business Leaders for Michigan (BLFM) and will continue to operate in Detroit and will be opening a second office in out-state Michigan, but not in Lansing.

"We see a void that a CEO group could fill," said David Brandon, CEO of Domino's and chairman of the group, arguing that the corporate officers would bring a focus on transformation to the state. Brandon added that half of the states in the U.S. have both a CEO group like BLFM and a state chamber of commerce.

Michigan Factoid:

Ernest Hemingway's short story Big Two-Hearted River is based on his experiences fishing the Fox River near Seney (pop. 180), but he used the more poetic name of the northeastern Big Two-Hearted River.

-- Michigan Trivia and Tidbits

The group is endorsing expanding the sales tax to include services as well as eliminating personal property taxes and slashing the state's Michigan Business Tax.

The Week Ahead

While House Speaker Andy Dillon promises no "around the clock" sessions going into the budget deadline -- the white hot spotlight of media attention will likely begin to be felt as leaders push negotiations into overdrive to find a budget agreement by Oct. 1.

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