

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



Census Counts Illegals; Michigan Loses Clout

There's no more vivid example of Michigan's dwindling clout on Capitol Hill than what has happened Up North in the four-plus decades that the state lost four congressmen.

In 1963-64, the Upper Peninsula actually had two U.S. House members.

Representative John Bennett (R-Ontonagon) represented eight western counties, and Representative Victor Knox (R-Sault Ste. Marie) represented the rest of the U.P. and nine counties below the bridge.

Now, Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) represents all of the Upper Peninsula, and 15 counties below the bridge, including part of Bay County more than half way down the Lake Huron shoreline.

According to the *Almanac of American Politics*, Stupak in sheer size has the second largest district east of the Mississippi, and the most shoreline of any district.

Some of the Grand Traverse area counties that long were in Stupak's district are now represented by Representatives Dave Camp (R-Midland), including Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau, and Pete Hoekstra (R-Holland), who has Benzie.

Such redistricting is not unusual after a census. And it figures that Michigan, losing population in relation to faster-growing states, would lose clout on Capitol Hill and have its members of Congress stretched more far and wide.

But what's not fair, and little reported, is that illegal citizens can get counted when the Census Bureau does the tally that determines how the 435 House members are divided among the states.

Friday, State Representative Glenn Steil Jr. (R-Cascade) announced a resolution urging the U.S. Congress to adopt an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to count only legal citizens, noting that "If only legal citizens were counted, California would have been allocated six fewer seats in the U.S. House of Representatives" than it now has. In 2000, one California district counted more than 260,000 non-citizens.

Steil's is a futile effort. His similar resolution in 2005 failed to get out of committee. Should the Legislature pass it this year, Congress, dominated by those who benefit from the system, undoubtedly would ignore it.

Nonetheless, cheers to Steil for pursuing the issue — one worthy of raising with all of the presidential candidates who will be passing through our parts in the coming months.

Northern Senators on Taxes

As expected, those who represent northern Michigan are split on the Senate GOP's Business and Economic Stimulus Tax (BEST) that emerged last week from the Senate Finance Committee, which includes

Sen. Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau.

She said the package, which will replace \$1.51 billion of the \$1.8 billion lost by elimination of the Single Business Tax, "will provide a much-needed boost for Michigan by helping companies expand, cutting taxes of job providers and encouraging the creation of more jobs."

But Sen. Michael Prusi, D-Ishpeming, vice-chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, reflecting Gov. Jennifer Granholm's position, said he hesitates to "support any plan that is not revenue neutral. ... We can't dig a deeper structural hole at this time."

Northern Congressmen on Iraq

The partisan split of northern Michigan's lawmakers in Washington on Iraq was not as sharp as it was in Lansing on taxes.

Democrat Stupak, responding to President Bush's State of the Union address, called Iraq "the proverbial elephant in the room...costing \$300 million a day, making it difficult, if not impossible to tackle many of the domestic policies the president discussed tonight....Clearly, the President does not understand that his policy on Iraq has been a failure."

While noting Bush "has removed his former leadership for the war" whose strategies "clearly have not worked," Republican Hoekstra, who chaired the House Intelligence Committee before Democrats took control of the chamber, said Bush "clearly needs to define the threat America is up against."

(Hoekstra last week was named by ex-Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney as his "advisor on all matters pertaining to U.S. Intelligence.")

Republican Camp, in a formal statement, said "walking away from" Iraq "would put Americans at risk." But Camp spokesman Sage Eastman said Friday Camp's commitment of support is contingent on the administration showing rapid "measurable progress" in Iraq.

Granholm's Northern Inaugurals

As she did after her first inaugural in 2003, Governor Jennifer Granholm held an inaugural celebration in Marquette this month. In her appearance at Northern Michigan University, she touted something that has bipartisan support in Lansing — the U.P. forestry industry.

Granholm's January inaugural celebration in Gaylord was canceled because of the funeral of ex-President Gerald R. Ford, but will be rescheduled as part of planned northern travels after her State of the State Address and budget presentation early in February.

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

DNR Advisory Group Helps Guide Wolf Management in Michigan



Members of the wolf management roundtable met in St. Ignace for their last meeting. Participants are (from left) Gaylord Alexander, Michigan Resource Stewards; Douglas Erickson, Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Commission; Miles Falck, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission; Michael Thorman, Michigan Hunting Dog Federation; Kerry Mullin, Michigan Humane Society; James Dabb, Safari Club International; Benjamin Bartlett, Michigan State University Extension; Gary Modlin, Upper Peninsula Whitetails Association; Steven Schaub, Timber Wolf Alliance; Nancy Warren, Defenders of Wildlife; Matthew Wood, Michigan Hunting Dog Federation; Douglas Crave, Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority; John Talsma, Michigan Farm Bureau; David Cromell, Michigan Sheriffs Association; John Hongisto, Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance; Patrick Lederle, DNR; Jimmie Mitchell, Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority; Dale DuFour, Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Commission; Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club; Thomas Courchaine, DNR; R. Ben Peyton, Michigan State University; Cynthia Radcliffe, National Wildlife Federation; Jason Dinsmore, Michigan United Conservation Clubs and Todd Hogrefe, DNR.

Wolves are no longer rare in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

During the 2006 wolf survey conducted by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) last winter, biologists estimated Michigan is home to more than 430 wolves.

After wolves began a natural recolonization of the U.P. in the early 1990s, a Michigan Gray Wolf Recovery and Management Plan was developed. Since then, the wolf population has grown steadily.

"The Michigan wolf population has reached a level where it is no longer at risk of extinction and it is time to focus on wolf management rather than wolf recovery," said Todd Hogrefe, DNR endangered species coordinator. "With wolf-human interactions becoming

more common, our management and education efforts must address both positive and negative experiences people can have with wolves."

The DNR currently is revising its gray wolf management plan. In the 10 years since that plan was finalized, wolf population size and distribution have expanded, and understanding of wolf biology has improved. The plan revision will allow the DNR to continue to conserve and manage wolves based on the best available scientific information.

The plan revision also is being conducted in anticipation of a change in federal status. Wolf populations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan have increased to the level where the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed



Outdoor Matters

A column from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

removing wolves in the western Great Lakes region from the federal list of threatened and endangered species.

Public input is critical for formulating a successful plan. In May 2005, the DNR conducted 10 public meetings (six in the U.P. and four in the Lower Peninsula) to identify wolf management issues. An open public-comment period also provided opportunities for input from citizens who could not attend the public meetings.

Based on the issues identified in the public's response, the DNR

asked researchers at Michigan State University to conduct a large survey of citizens' attitudes toward wolves and wolf management. Nearly 10,000 Michigan citizens were contacted.

Results suggested Michigan citizens have a wide range of values, beliefs, and attitudes toward wolves. A wolf management roundtable was created by DNR Wildlife Chief Bill Moritz to address different opinions of how wolves should be managed. The roundtable contained representa-

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

War Soldier Says 'Let Us Finish the Job'

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to the letter titled "War Veteran Says Demand End of US Occupation in Iraq."

First, Mr. Archambeau, let me thank you for your service. Like you, I am also a war veteran. I am a veteran of the war you are demanding an end to. I served one year there and returned home in June 2006. Like most of our brave men and women, I volunteered to go to Iraq. Also like most, I would return again with no questions asked. I guess the reason is, unlike most Americans, I actually have seen Iraq and what really happens there.

You, like most Americans, most likely get your information from a very biased media that only talks and shows the bad. Yes, it is true that more than 3,000 American soldiers have given the ultimate sacrifice. Seven of my friends who served with me are among them. Countless more have been wounded, myself

among them.

Well, that is all the media wants you to hear. They will tell you that Iraq and its people do not want us there. That simply is not true.

During my tour (in the Al Anbar Province), I had the privilege of meeting many Iraqi citizens. They were some of the nicest and most appreciative people I have ever met in my life. They were very thankful to the American soldiers who have given them freedom, five new schools (two of which were for females, who have never been allowed schooling), two new medical clinics, and the underground sewer system, which they have never had.

Yes, before we came the sewer just ran down the street, causing many health problems. All of the children in the area now have up-to-date vaccinations. Yes, this is the stuff our media does a great job of not telling the public here. Yes, we have dismantled the government and

military there. Yes, more soldiers are dying there every day. However, if we leave now as you suggest and leave Iraq to the terrorists, it will not be able to defend itself.

Like I said, we dismantled its military. So Iraq will fall into the hands of the terrorists (by the way, the majority are not Iraqi citizens). They will have a safe haven to grow in strength and train until they can once again attack us here at home, which of course means the more than 3,000 soldiers who gave their lives will have done so for nothing.

If this is what you want as Americans, then please demand that our troops return home now and sit

back and wait until the next attack on America, and pray that your family is not affected by the attack, because it will happen.

If, on the other hand, you are like me and the majority of our brave men and women, let us finish the job, get Iraq stable and able to defend itself, then return home knowing the terrorists now have a much less chance of having that safe haven, the chances of them attacking again seriously diminished.

It is your choice as Americans. Thank you.

Sgt. Lawrence C. McQuiston
St. Ignace

Donator to School Should Be Example for State Lawmakers

To the Editor:

Owing to a private donation of \$15,000, Les Cheneaux Community Schools in Cedarville will not be closing its doors for 10 days during the second semester.

This caring individual put the welfare of our children first and understands the true benefit of investing in the future of our youth. These are troubling times for educators in the State of Michigan. Parents and lawmakers continue to demand more from public schools, standards have been raised, and expectations are higher than ever before.

Yet, funding has declined like never before. Despite this, our school system has been honored with state academic awards, while also offering broad educational and

technological opportunities to students. Our sports participation is second to none.

This true philanthropist showed great spirit by providing this kind donation and showed belief in our educational system and our children. We can only hope that this example will be followed by our state lawmakers.

It is time to put our children and our future first. It is time to develop school funding that is consistent and reliable.

Our schools can cut budgets no further and still provide the quality education that is needed and required for our children to compete in a global society.

Gary Wellnitz, president
Les Cheneaux Federation of Teachers

\$15,000 to School Is 'Fabulous'

To the Editor,

I would like to acknowledge the anonymous person who recently donated \$15,000 to the Les Cheneaux Community Schools.

This is a fabulous gift that will enable us to continue on with the original school calendar adopted for this year. We do not have to add 35 minutes per school day and cut 10 scheduled days of school as a result of this gift.

We will not have 11 support staff people missing 10 days of pay. It will not cost parents addi-

tional child care expenses; and most importantly, our children's education will not be affected adversely.

You accomplished much for our schools and students through your generous donation, and this district is grateful for your contribution to education.

Susie Rutledge,
president of the Support Staff
Union
at Les Cheneaux Community
School

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and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.