

Our picks in the Aug. 6 primary

The Observer has made the following endorsements for the Aug. 6 primary election.

In the Democratic primary for governor we endorse **Jennifer Granholm**. The Attorney General has been the most thoughtful and articulate of the three Democratic candidates. She is willing to work with those of opposing views. Her stance as a moderate is also reflected in her positions on the issues.

In the Republican primary, we endorse state Sen. **John "Joe" Schwarz**. He is the one candidate willing to tell voters what they need to hear, not just what they want to hear. A political moderate, Schwarz argues that the GOP has moved too far to the right. Schwarz has shown a real understanding of the state's budgetary problems.

In the new 9th Congressional District we endorse **Joe Knollenberg**. What impresses us about Knollenberg is, despite the fact he works full-time in Washington, he makes a concerted effort to visit the district on a regular basis, speaking before service organizations and appearing at local functions. He also has efficient offices both in the district and at the Capitol, and his staff is readily available to address the needs of his constituents.

Voters face two state proposals. We urge a **yes** vote on a proposal that would require the legislature to approve executive and legislative compensation increases recommended by an independent board. We also urge a **yes** vote for a proposal to allow investment of endowment moneys in equities to increase funding for parks and recreation. We recommend a **yes** on the renewal and increase in the public transportation millage for SMART.

Candidates take stand

We congratulate Aldo Vagnozzi, Chriss Heath and Terry Sever, candidates for state House district 37, and Gilda Jacobs candidate for state Senate district 14.

They have taken a principled stand in favor of constitutionally mandated funding of special education services and programs for the citizens of Farmington and Farmington Hills; it means the difference of millions of dollars that should be flowing to our local schools instead of being cut from our budgets.

In an attempt to resolve the 22-year dispute with the state of Michigan, we contacted the candidates to educate them about the issue. We asked them to understand and act upon the knowledge that the Headlee amendment to the Michigan Constitution is not just a suggestion - it is the law of the land. It requires the state to pay for programs and services that it mandates local units of government to provide.

We urge you to consider Aldo Vagnozzi, Chriss Heath and Terry Sever in their bid for state representative and Gilda Jacobs in her bid for state Senate.

Frank Reid, Lori Stofflett, Michael Bridges
District Representatives
The Coalition to Keep the Promise to Michigan's Children

Refreshing choice

What a refreshing choice we have this year in Valerie Knol, a candidate for State Representative.

Her vision includes strong law enforcement, continuous improvements in our educational system, more responsive health and human services, better roads, controlled community growth and environmental enhancement.

statewide economic development and jobs for Michigan.

And without a doubt, Valerie Knol will always be vigilant when it comes to our tax dollars. She is truly a "tax fighter" who will operate within a budget and diligently look for ways to reduce taxes.

She has demonstrated good business sense, leadership and organizational abilities. She knows how to balance and operate within a prescribed budget and, at the same time, initiate new and innovative procedures to insure that she does so. It is no wonder she was the only candidate to receive the Preferred rating from the Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce.

It is just one of the reasons she has been endorsed by the Small Business Association of Michigan, the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce and many other organizations. This kind of highly successful business background and experience will be invaluable to the State Legislature.

I urge you to vote for Valerie Knol for State Representative on Aug. 6. She is ready to represent us in Lansing. And most importantly, she will do it, side by side, with citizens and residents so that we all will be a part of building our future.

Donn Wolf
Former Farmington Hills Mayor

Character counts

When it comes to character, decency, honesty and hard work, John Akouri is the right choice for State Representative.

I'm proud to say I've known John since his years at North Farmington High School and will be even more proud to see him representing us in Lansing.

John has served us well on the Zoning Board of Appeals and as a Press Secretary to Congressman Joe

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Knollenberg. That experience will make for qualified representation in Lansing.

But more than having the right qualification, I know that John has the right heart for the job. He won't forget his roots, which have been here in Farmington and Farmington Hills for more than 30 years, and he won't forget our community's schools, which he is proud to have attended.

He won't forget his family, which is such an important part of his life, and he won't forget his friends, who have helped him along his way. He won't forget these things because he will be representing his home, a community he has dedicated himself for so long.

That's what makes for a good State Representative. That's why John Akouri has my vote.

Marilyn Begun
Farmington Hills

Support SMART

We urge voters on Aug. 6 to approve the SMART millage and retain public transportation in Greater Detroit.

The millage renewal and partial increase would merely fund SMART transit service at its rather basic current levels. It will preserve a minimum public transit option for those who have no other options. If the millage is rejected, public transit will not simply be reduced, rather, all SMART transportation services would end by Labor Day.

SMART provides about 10 million rides annually, an amount that has steadily increased over the past decade. Employers know it is used by many young people and other employees to get to jobs they cannot otherwise reach, particularly in Oakland County and by customers who shop at their stores. College students regularly use it to get to class.

In addition, SMART is widely used by elderly and disabled people to reach doctors, purchase groceries and maintain a measure of independence. SMART provides 13,000 rides each year to people needing dialysis treatments who otherwise could need an ambulance.

SMART provides a valuable and needed service to our community. As one conservative newspaper stated, funding this service "not only is worth doing, but the alternative is unthinkable."

Mark Steckloff
Farmington Hills

Outstanding candidate

We have known Councilman Barry Brickner for more than 30 years and he will make an outstanding judge. Barry is fair, honest, ethical and has a lot of integrity.

He has great judicial temperament. He is even tempered and has a wonderful sense of humor. He is the type of person who will make citizens feel comfortable in the court, yet be tough when situations warrant it.

Barry is a dedicated, hard worker and we are confident that he will be able to give everyone their day in court, yet move the docket along efficiently. Barry's commitment to our community is unshakable. No other candidate can match his legal, professional and community experience.

We urge you to vote for Barry Brickner for District Judge.

Debbie and Tom Williams
Farmington Hills

Will vote Brickner

On Aug. 6, we will choose among seven candidates for the District Court Judge vacancy. I am voting for Barry Brickner.

Barry is well known in the legal community for the articles he has written and the seminars he has given on the practice of law. He has spoken at local, county, state and national levels and regularly presents a seminar on District Court practice.

Besides being active in our community, he truly is the lawyer other lawyers call in order to become a better lawyer. He will make a fine addition on our District Court bench.

Michael R. Splice
Miller, Splice & Tischler, PC
Attorneys at Law
Southfield

Blizman stands apart

There are many candidates for 47th District Court Judge in the upcoming election, Aug. 6. Paul Blizman stands apart from all other candidates in his involvement with the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural Multiracial Community Council. As a community member, Paul has given commitment and energy to our mission of "...Promoting awareness and acceptance of diversity in our community."

In his work with our Council, Paul has shown thoughtful consideration and respect for various opinions expressed in subcommittee meetings and kept a sensible and caring manner while working to achieve the Council's goals.


In our opinion, Paul Blizman would be a contemporary of the judge who, most importantly, would treat fairly all those who would come before him.

Jim Hall and Karen Boisen,
co-chairs
Farmington/Farmington Hills
Multicultural Multiracial Community
Council

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