

Primary Season

Thursday, July 31, marked the start of early voting in Arizona. With a majority of voters having received their ballot over the weekend, all eyes are on the August 26th Republican Primary which promises to be hotly contested for all statewide offices. Two of those contentious primary races are for the Republican nomination for Arizona Governor and Attorney General. The Republican Gubernatorial field is crowded and includes several familiar faces:

- Ken Bennett, Arizona Secretary of State
- Doug Ducey, Arizona State Treasurer
- Christine Jones, former GoDaddy legal counsel
- Frank Riggs, former California Congressman
- Scott Smith, former Mayor of Mesa, AZ
- Andy Thomas, former, disbarred Maricopa County Attorney

By most accounts, the race for Governor appears to be boiling down to Doug Ducey and Christine Jones with Scott Smith and Ken Bennett further behind. Almost every impartial poll – if there is such a thing – shows Ducey and Jones relatively neck and neck for first place, but there are still a significant number of undecided voters so the question remains, which of the other candidates could play the role of spoiler.

The Republican primary contest for Attorney General is also heating up as incumbent Tom Horne faces newcomer, former Arizona Gaming Director, Mark Brnovich. Horne has been the subject of numerous investigations during the last several years, and if he survives the primary, smart money is on Felicia Rotellini beating the incumbent in the General due to her name ID from the 2010 race, the excitement and support generated from her party, and Horne's baggage during his time in office. However, Brnovich is attacking Horne hard and receiving the vast majority of endorsements, so he is still very much in the primary race.

In the Secretary of State's race, three Republican candidates are vying for the nomination in the primary:

- Wil Cardon, former US Senate candidate
- Justin Pierce, State Representative
- Michele Reagan, State Senator

The race has grabbed headlines because of the record spending by outside, so called "dark money" independent expenditure groups. The race will likely come down to Reagan and Pierce, as the former has been a prolific fundraiser and the latter the recipient of the dark money independent expenditure spending. Reagan appears to have a slight edge at this point. The race becomes one of the more relevant when considering that since 1977, four of Arizona's Secretaries of State have ascended to the Governor's office for one reason or another. As the saying goes, "The Secretary of State is a heartbeat away from the 9th Floor [Governor's office]".

The next State Treasurer for Arizona will be decided in the August 26th primary since there are no Democrats running for the seat in the general election. The seat is open because Doug Ducey is running for Governor. The three challengers have become increasingly combative, and in recent days, directly attacking their opponents. Generally speaking, the Treasurer has no real influence in Arizona policy, but the office is seen by some as an stepping-stone for future higher office. The candidates are:

- Jeff DeWit, political newcomer and former financial investor
- Hugh Hallman, former Tempe Mayor
- Randy Pullen, former GOP Party Chair

At this point, there is no clear-cut leader.

The race for Superintendent of Public Instruction became much more controversial after the incumbent, John Huppenthal, was identified as an anonymous blogger who has made several anonymous, and controversial, comments on local websites. While Huppenthal will likely survive the primary against a single issue candidate in Diane Douglas – fighter of all things “Common Core” – his anonymous posts have the potential to be his albatross in the November general election against David Garcia, a highly qualified ASU education professor.

Each Republican nominee in the aforementioned races, excluding State Treasurer, will face a competitive general election to be decided on November 4th. Arizona Democrats have very strong contenders for several statewide offices, including the presumptive Democrat candidates for the following:

- Governor: Fred DuVal
- Secretary of State: Terry Goddard
- Attorney General: Felecia Rotellini
- Superintendent: David Garcia

Additionally, Arizona has several very competitive Congressional races, including:

- **Congressional District 1** [one of the largest districts in the United States, covering eastern Arizona from Arizona’s northern boundary to Tucson – *Competitive district*]:
 - Democratic candidate: Ann Kirkpatrick, Incumbent, Arizona CD1
 - Republican candidates: Andy Tobin, Arizona Speaker of the House
Adam Kwasman, Arizona State Representative
Gary Kiehne, Arizona hotelier and oilman

Tobin appears to have the lead for the Republican nomination at this point.

- **Congressional District 2** [Tucson and Southern Arizona – *Very competitive district*]
 - Democratic candidate: Ron Barber, Incumbent, Arizona CD2
 - Republican candidates: Martha McSally, 2012 CD2 challenger, former fighter pilot
Shelley Kais, Business consultant and former McSally campaign supporter
Chuck Wooten, retired airman

McSally should again win the Republican nomination, and if that is the case, national pundits have identified the race as a toss-up.

- **Congressional District 7** [Central and south Phoenix – Democrat safe district]
 - Democratic candidates: Ruben Gallego, former Arizona House Majority Leader
Mary Rose Wilcox, former Maricopa County Supervisor

After the retirement of longtime Congressman Ed Pastor, the Democratic primary is a battlefield, pitting the new guard (Gallego) against the old guard (Wilcox). It is a very tight race.

- **Congressional District 9** [Tempe and south Phoenix – Likely remains Democrat]
 - Democratic candidates: Kyrsten Sinema, Incumbent, Arizona CD9
 - Republican candidates: Andrew Walter, former NFL, ASU quarterback
Wendy Rogers, Arizona CD9 challenger

Regardless of who wins the Republican primary, the incumbent Sinema appears to be safe.

Several key state legislative races are also up for grabs as incumbents seek higher office or are term-limited and we will cover those in our next report. However, you should note that the House will be selecting a new Speaker, Majority Leader, and Whip, while the Senate will be selecting at least a new Majority Leader. We do not foresee a shift in the balance of power in either of the two chambers, leaving Republicans in the majority in both the Senate and House.

Candidates vying for the Republican Senate leadership positions are:

President:	Andy Biggs (LD12, Gilbert), Current President Steve Pierce (LD1, northern Arizona, Prescott) former President
Majority Leader:	Adam Driggs (LD28, central and north Phoenix), current Whip Steve Yarbrough (LD17, east valley, Chandler)
Whip:	Kelli Ward (LD5, Lake Havasu)

On the minority side, the Senate Democrats will be electing at least a new Minority Leader and Whip:

- Minority Leader: Katie Hobbs (LD24, Central Phoenix)
- Assistant Minority Leader: Lynn Pancrazi (LD4, Yuma)
- Whip: Steve Farley (LD9, Tucson)

All of the Republican House leadership roles are available, with the following legislators seeking each respective position:

- Speaker: Eddie Farnsworth (LD12, Gilbert), former Majority Leader
David Gowan (LD14, Sierra Vista) current Majority Leader
JD Mesnard (LD17, Chandler), current Speaker Pro Tem.
- Majority Leader: Rick Gray (LD21, West Valley, Sun City), current Whip
Steve Montenegro (LD13 Buckeye, Yuma)
- Whip: Karen Fann (LD1, Northern Arizona, Prescott)
David Livingston (LD22, Peoria)

On the minority side, the House Democrats will also see new faces in leadership, electing a Minority Leader, Assistant Minority Leader, and Whip.

- Minority Leader: Eric Meyer (LD28, central and north Phoenix), current Whip
- Assistant Minority Leader: Mark Cardenas (LD19, west valley, Avondale)
Andrew Sherwood (LD26, Tempe)
- Whip: Stephanie Mach (LD10, Tucson)
Victoria Steele (LD9, Tucson)

The make up of the Senate and House leadership races identified above could change depending on the results of the August primary and the November general elections. In any event, it promises to be a busy summer and fall as the next administration and State Legislature welcome new faces, and inevitably, new ideas and agendas, complicated by the clear divide amongst the majority Republican caucus' "moderates" and "conservatives."