

INSIDE MICHIGAN POLITICS

Inside Michigan Politics: 2014 State of the State Winners and Losers

Snyder Woos Seniors After Pension Tax, Democrats Lose Powerful Tax Hike Issue In 2014 Election

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Gov. **Rick Snyder** last night gave his last State of the State address before the 2014 election. *Inside Michigan Politics* breaks down who got the thumbs up from the governor and who took it on the chin.

Winners

- **Seniors.** They took heir lumps in 2011 when Snyder pushed the unpopular pension tax. In *IMP's* bipartisan poll last November, Snyder trailed Democrat **Mark Schauer** by 10 points with voters 65+ -- typically a GOP stronghold. Last night, Snyder tried to win seniors back, promising a "special message" for them and advocating more funding for seniors' home-delivered meals.

- **Republicans.** Democrats have been banging the drum for three years about Republicans' \$1.4 billion tax hike on individuals to pay for business tax cuts. But Snyder promised tax relief for middle-class families, although he notably buried this at the bottom of his speech since he's still not a big fan. The tax cut is expected to be minimal, but in politics, that doesn't matter. Republicans can still trumpet that they did it, snatching a powerful issue from Dems in November.

Losers

- **Roads.** The centerpiece of Snyder's 2013 SOS was raising more than \$1 billion a year to fix Michigan's bumpy roads. But Republicans and Democrats alike cringed at the tax and fee hikes it would take to get there, and no progress has been made. Last night, Snyder

may have spent a minute on roads and made a plea for “Relentless Positive Action” on the issue. But it’s clear not much is going to happen, at least not until after the election.

- **Gay Community.** Some Republicans have expressed interest in adding gays to the Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Act barring discrimination in jobs and housing, as 75% of Michigan voters support it. But Snyder, who signed a bill banning gay partner benefits for public workers, again ignored that issue in his speech. At the beginning, Snyder appeared to make an oblique an reference to GOP National Committeeman Dave Agema, though not by name, who has compared gays to alcoholics and stated that Muslims haven’t contributed anything to society. The governor criticized “incivility.”

Split Decision

- **Tea Party.** Members of these conservative groups must have been wincing at the beginning of Snyder’s SOS, as he touted a greatest hits of things they oppose -- the new public bridge from Detroit to Canada, Medicaid expansion and a new state office for immigration. But toward the end, Snyder threw them some red meat by encouraging the state House and Senate to pass (nonbinding) resolutions supporting a federal Balanced Budget Amendment. That was the biggest applause line of the night.

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