



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 20, 2010

## Liberal House Veteran Dingell Expects to Keep His Seat

In an election year when it appears no incumbent is safe, Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) is on cruise control. He even poo-pooes the latest poll showing him 4 points behind his newcomer challenger, Rob Steele. Dingell is the longest serving member of the House and, at age 84, sports a Freedom Index rating of just 5 out of 100.

Representing a district near Detroit with a strong union influence, Dingell has usually won reelection with more than 60 percent of the vote. And he could be reelected again, except for a few troubling details.

Michigan's unemployment rate is the second-highest in the country, he voted for much of the Obama agenda including ObamaCare, and many this year consider "incumbent" a four-letter word.



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He recently voted against an effort to repeal the "individual mandate" which is currently being challenged as unconstitutional by 20 states' attorneys general, he voted in favor of the DISCLOSE act to override the recent Supreme Court decision Citizens United giving corporations the same rights to free speech enjoyed by individuals in broadcasting "electioneering communications," and he supported Financial Regulatory Reform, the monstrosity masquerading as a "fix" to prevent future fiscal crises that led to the current economic recession. He scarcely can be found to vote against any enlargement of the federal government, including unemployment benefits, supplemental appropriations, and Medicaid and additional education assistance. And he voted to allow a "lame duck" session to convene after the election even if he doesn't keep his seat. Lame duck sessions in the past have allowed Congress more opportunities for legislative mischief, and this year appears to be no different.

Dingell's opponent, Rob Steele, is a cardiologist who has entered the political wars for the first time. Focusing his campaign on "spending accountability," Steele says, "For months I have been having people tell me how unhappy they are. More people want him retired than reelected." He opposes ObamaCare, saying that healthcare services "will become more scarce with an increase in total cost. Costs for the younger healthier generation will skyrocket [while] availability of services for seniors will be decreased." He favors a balanced budget amendment and would freeze federal spending at 18-20 percent of GDP. He says, "The most important long term issue is Social Security and Medicare ... stop the posturing, the problem must be faced."

Steele hopes that his interests in autocross and shooting sports will attract some independents, along with those disaffected by Dingell's far-left votes. If a recent poll is any indication, he might just be right. A "robo" poll of 300 people on Friday, October 8, showed Steele receiving 43.8 percent of the vote with Dingell getting only 39.5 percent. That 4 percent advantage is within the poll's margin of error. But any



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incumbent with Dingell's long-term history polling less than 50 percent this late in the game "is a remarkable development," according to the *Daily Caller*.

The [latest Rasmussen poll](#) is also helping Steele. It reveals that most Likely Voters "think their representative in Congress does not deserve reelection if he or she voted for the national health care law, the auto bailouts or the \$787 billion stimulus plan.... Sixty two percent of voters think it would be better for the country if most congressional incumbents are defeated this November."

Dingell himself appears to be relatively unconcerned, which could be his ultimate downfall. He is supported by the local teachers' unions, and is considered "a pillar here," according to Dena Voukides, the owner of a local diner in Monroe. "Unless he decides he doesn't want to be in politics, he's not going anywhere."

In a year when no incumbent is safe, Dingell just might in fact not be "going anywhere."



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