



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on August 8, 2012

Mich. Primary: Bentivolio, Amash, Hoekstra All Winners

Reindeer farmer and high school teacher Kerry Bentivolio easily prevailed in a Michigan GOP congressional primary August 7 to replace U.S. Rep. Thad McCotter against a well-funded establishment insurgency by former state senator Nancy Cassis, [66-34](#).

Bentivolio did have a significant advantage in the race: He was the only one on the ballot after the incumbent McCotter failed to submit enough signatures to get on the ballot this year. McCotter later dropped out of the race. When the high school teacher became the likely GOP nominee, the GOP establishment rallied against the Ron Paul fan and Federal Reserve critic, eventually settling on Cassis, who [put up \\$200,000 of her own money](#) in what turned out to be a failed write-in campaign. While Cassis had the endorsement of much of the GOP establishment, Bentivolio had won the endorsement of Texas Congressman Ron Paul, his son Kentucky Senator Rand Paul, and Michigan Congressman Justin Amash.



Bentivolio also benefited from outside support; the Texas-based [Liberty for All Super-PAC](#) invested \$650,000 in Bentivolio's victory in the weeks before the primary. "Now we have another principled Constitutionalist to fight for our freedom in Congress," the Super-PAC boasted on [its Facebook page](#) after results of the primary were reported.

In other Michigan primary news, freshman Michigan Republican Representative Justin Amash ([Freedom Index](#) rating 93 percent) will face off in November against [former state senator Steve Pestka](#), who [prevailed](#) against a former staffer for the pro-homosexuality Human Rights Campaign in the [contentious](#) Democratic primary.

The libertarian-leaning congressman has not been a stranger to local controversy himself. Amash ran afoul of the [Michigan Right to Life Committee](#) back in March for voting "Present" on a bill that would strip funding from Planned Parenthood. Amash explained on [his Facebook page](#) that while he was 100 percent pro-life and eager to stop federal funding of abortion, he could not vote for an [unconstitutional "bill of attainder"](#) that punished a single organization by name, as the bill in front of him did, even an organization as reprehensible as Planned Parenthood.

Despite losing the local Right to Life Committee endorsement, Amash has been [named](#) as among the 35 most influential Republicans under 35 years of age by the District of Columbia Republican Committee. The freshman congressman has amassed a national following, and many consider Amash an ideological



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successor to the retiring Texas Congressman Ron Paul.

In the U.S. Senate race from Michigan, former Republican Congressman Pete Hoeskstra ([Freedom Index](#) rating for 2009-10 Congress 79 percent) [won](#) the right to challenge [two-term](#) Democratic incumbent U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow ([Freedom Index](#) rating 14 percent) in November. Hoekstra emerged from a four-way primary in which he always held the lead in opinion polls, though he faced a sharp challenge from Clark Durant, the founder of the Christian “Cornerstone” charter schools.

Durant won [endorsements](#) from some key Republican figures in the months leading up to the primary, including Mike Huckabee and Fred Thompson as well as free marketeer Steve Forbes. Hoekstra had the backing of the Republican Governor Rick Snyder and former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum.

Photos: In a June 6, 2012 photo, Kerry Bentivolio, left, is seen at a Tea Party rally in Howell: AP Images. Representative Justin Amash and former Rep. Pete Hoeskstra are shown center and right.



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