



15 Detroit mayoral candidates prepare for primary

By COREY WILLIAMS – 1 day ago

DETROIT (AP) — Detroit residents voting for mayor may get a sense of déjà vu by fall: When it's all over, four trips to the polls will be necessary.

The first step is Tuesday, when 11 men and four women seek to fill out the remainder of disgraced ex-Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick's second term.

Two will advance to a May 5 runoff. Then there are the regularly scheduled August primary and November election for the next full four-year term.

Whoever emerges will inherit a municipal and fiscal mess left by Kilpatrick, a Democrat. Various agencies have dropped Detroit's bond rating to junk status and the city's budget deficit could rise as high as \$300 million.

The financially troubled city is spending \$3.5 million on the regular 2009 election, and another \$2.5 million on the two special elections, despite concerns that only 11 to 15 percent of Detroit's 626,000 registered voters will cast ballots Tuesday.

"It's really about restoring confidence. People have very strong feelings about the previous administration," University of Detroit Mercy political science professor Victoria Mantzopoulos said.

Kilpatrick resigned in September as part of pleas in two criminal cases stemming from lies he told during a whistle-blowers' trial and a text-messaging sex scandal involving his former top aide. The once-popular mayor was released from jail earlier this month after serving 99 days of a 120-sentence.

After Kilpatrick stepped down, Ken Cockrel Jr. moved up to the mayor's office from his elected position as city council president. He will serve as mayor until the May 5 winner is certified, no later than 14 days after that election is held.

If he is one of the two top vote-getters Tuesday and wins in May, Cockrel remains mayor through the end of the year. If he loses Tuesday, Detroit will get three different mayors in less than 12 months — and Cockrel will get his position back at the city council.

The major candidates in the nonpartisan primary Tuesday all are Democrats.

Cockrel has been endorsed by a number of unions and has a co-endorsement from the Council of Baptist Pastors of Detroit & Vicinity.

A rival, Freman Hendrix, has been endorsed by former Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer, along with a number of prominent clergy. He served as deputy mayor under Archer.

Candidate Dave Bing has been endorsed by The Detroit News and the Fannie Lou Hamer Political Action Committee.

Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans is endorsed by the Detroit Free Press and a number of prominent Detroit pastors, including gospel music legend the Rev. Marvin Winans of Perfecting Church. The Council of Baptist Pastors of Detroit & Vicinity gave him a co-endorsement.

The Michigan Chronicle, Detroit's largest black newspaper, decided not to endorse any candidate in Tuesday's primary.

"It was too close to call for us," publisher Sam Logan said. "All have good credentials and could run the city. We're concerned about who is going to be our mayor for four years. We're not just concerned about the next six or seven months."

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