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## Governor Whitmer Wants to Win Reelection

Gretchen Whitmer was one of Donald Trump's least favorite governors. She repeatedly stood up to his bullying in taking strong measures to fight a COVID-19 virus that had hit Michigan early and hard. He referred to her as "that woman from Michigan." We proudly referred to her as "Big Gretch".

So, what has happened to our brave Governor Whitmer as the summer of 2021 winds down and we are fighting the Delta variant, with the Lambda variant somewhere off in the distance. The woman who survived a nutty but quite serious kidnapping plot refuses to issue mask mandates and she refuses to issue vaccine mandates. Why has our brave Governor become ... less brave?

The simple answer is that *she wants to win reelection*. In an earlier [blog](#), YB referred to the "median voter" model. In a nutshell, politicians seek to win elections and to do this they must win in the middle or the median of the electorate. The median voter in Michigan, according to *Detroit Free Press* surveys (<https://www.freep.com/story/news/politics/2021/08/22/michigan-vaccine-mandate-mask-poll/8197047002/>) reported on August 22 is characterized as follows. Of the 600 people surveyed, 52% favored a mandate to wear masks while indoors, while 44% opposed it. However, only 33% favored a government vaccine mandate, compared with the 61% who oppose such a move. In short, the median voter slightly favors a mask mandate, and more strongly opposes a vaccine mandate.

Michigan is a "purple state" with a slight blue tinge at the state-wide level. When the Democrats vote in Michigan (2018 and 2020), they win. Governor Whitmer will win Wayne (Detroit), Washtenaw (Ann Arbor), Oakland (Detroit suburbs), Ingham (Lansing) and Genesee (Flint) Counties. These counties have been reliably Democratic in the last several elections. She also needs to win Kalamazoo and Kent (Grand Rapids) Counties, where she will have to pick off a good number of thoughtful Independent, and moderate Republican voters.

Governor Whitmer made some difficult decisions in 2020 that made a lot of people angry but saved a lot of lives. To win in 2022, she must tack back toward the median voter. Her less activist stance will not win over troglodytes like Nolan Finley (Editorial voice of the *Detroit News*) or Mike Shirkey (outgoing State Senate Majority Leader). That is not who she is seeking. Policy wonks like YB will spend the next year being disappointed by this backtracking, and will worry about the possible lives lost. Some progressives may vote against her because they feel she is not doing enough, but it is important to understand why she is doing it. She wants to win!

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