Doyle won’t seek re-election in 2010

By Lee Bergquist, Stacy Forster and Patrick Marley of the Journal Sentinel

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Gov. Jim Doyle on Monday will announce that he won’t seek re-election to a third term in 2010, prompting the state’s first wide-open gubernatorial race since 1982.

A spokeswoman for Doyle said Saturday the governor will announce his future political plans on Monday, although she declined to provide details.

Carol Andrews, the governor’s communications director, disclosed that Doyle was making the announcement after Politico reported Doyle has told associates he won’t seek re-election.


The Journal Sentinel independently confirmed that report Saturday night.


The state’s first wide-open gubernatorial race since 1982.

Jim Doyle: Segging poll numbers may be a factor in his decision. A survey conducted June 8-10 by Daily Kos / Research 2000 found that 43% approved of Doyle and 48% disapproved.

Contenders

The state Republican Party issued a statement saying the party was positioned to take back the governor’s office by emphasizing jobs and lower taxes.

Republican Party Chairman Reince Priebus said in an interview that he had no firsthand knowledge of Doyle’s plans. “But all of our common sense tells us that if his spokesman says he’s making a statement about his future on Monday, and his poll numbers are down, you would imagine that the announcement isn’t that he’s seeking another term,” Priebus said.

One veteran Democratic legislator who asked not to be identified out of loyalty to Doyle said he thinks Doyle started the year expecting to run, but recently asked himself this question: “Why do I want to continue to do this?”

If Doyle serves out his term, he would have served 20 years as a top state official - eight years as governor and 12 as attorney general.

He would turn 65 weeks after the November 2010 election, when the next governor must begin preparing the 2011-'13 state budget. Doyle would be making the announcement after Politico reported Doyle has told associates he won’t seek re-election.

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Opening up the field

If Doyle does not seek re-election, speculation about who will run fluctuates from day to day, although most analysts believe no Democrat would challenge Doyle for the nomination.

Some Democrats have called for Doyle to resign because he failed to act on cases that critics accused of being politically motivated.

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State Rep. Mark Pocan, a Madison Democrat and co-chair of the Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee, said it was telling that Doyle’s poll numbers were “so low” on the day he’d have no firsthand knowledge of Doyle’s plans. “You know if the governor is going to run, his poll numbers are going to come up,” Pocan said.

Earlier this summer, some bloggers reported that Doyle was expected to take a job with President Barack Obama. His staff immediately dismissed those reports as false.

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said.

Milwaukee Democratic state Rep. Pedro Colón said there has been considerable speculation about Doyle’s plans.

“My biggest concern throughout the last couple of months with the governor was that he didn’t seem to have