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Doyle won't seek re-election in 2010

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

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Joe Koshollek

Jim Doyle: Sagging 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.

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 would be making the announcement after Politico reported Doyle has told associates he won't seek re-election.

Politico, a Washington, D.C.-based Web site, cited anonymous sources.

The Journal Sentinel independently confirmed that report Saturday night.

Even before that confirmation, top state Democrats were saying Saturday that they did not expect Doyle to run again.

State Rep. Mark Pocan, a Madison Democrat and co-chair of the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee, said it was telling that Doyle's people didn't immediately disavow the Politico report.

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.

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 is 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 and the Legislature had to eliminate a more than \$6 billion deficit this year, with furloughs of state workers, tax increases and \$3 billion in federal stimulus money.

Those stimulus dollars won't be available when state officials tackle the next budget in 18 months.

Also, the veteran Democratic legislator said that Doyle is painfully conscious of the angry tone of recent meetings with voters and members of Congress, especially over health care - meetings that signal the tone of the next gubernatorial campaign.

"People are coming to these meetings with pitchforks," the legislator

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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

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