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## **Jocelyn Benson Creates Committee to Explore a Run for Michigan Secretary of State**

*Election Law Expert Is Dedicated to  
Making Michigan a Model State for Election Administration*

LANSING, MI – Professor Jocelyn Benson today filed paperwork with the Secretary of State to create an exploratory committee as for a possible campaign for Michigan Secretary of State in 2010.

Benson is currently a full time Assistant Professor of Law at Wayne State University Law School, where she teaches Election Law. She has built a career as an educator, attorney, and voter advocate dedicated to promoting access and protecting the integrity of the election process.

“I’m exploring a run for Secretary of State because I believe that with the right leadership, Michigan can be the model state for ethical government and excellence in election administration,” said Benson in an announcement on her website, [www.VoteBenson.com](http://www.VoteBenson.com). “I am first and foremost dedicated to ensuring that our elections are fair, accurate, accessible, secure, and that the public can trust the results of the election. We need to put aside partisanship and focus on implementing common sense reforms that will help us reach those goals.”

After receiving overwhelming support for her proposals for early voting and no reason absentee voting at the Michigan Democratic Party Convention on February 21, Benson was encouraged to take the next step in considering a run by creating an exploratory committee. With the formation of the committee, Benson will begin a

listening tour throughout the state to discuss what can be done to improve our elections and the other functions of the Secretary of State's office. She plans to make a final decision on whether to pursue a run before the end of the year.

A group supporting Benson's candidacy on the social networking website Facebook formed in the days following the state Democratic convention, and nearly 500 members joined to express their support in less than 24 hours. The group now boasts nearly 1,000 members.

As an attorney, Benson also serves as a member of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Election Law, and is the founder of the Richard Austin Center on Election Law and Administration. The Austin Center, incorporated in October 2008, seeks to work with local election administrators to promote innovations and improve the election administration process in Michigan.

Prior to her appointment as a Professor, Benson served as a law clerk to the Honorable Damon J. Keith on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. During the 2004 Presidential election, Benson was hired to develop the first nationwide Election Protection program for the Democratic National Committee. From 2002-2004, she served as the Voting Rights Policy Coordinator of the Harvard Civil Rights Project, where she worked on the passage of the federal Help America Vote Act.

Benson's first book, *Democracy and the Secretary*, will be published this fall. It will highlight the crucial role that a strong secretary of state's office can play in protecting the integrity of elections. The book will highlight best practices of Secretaries from throughout the country and will illustrate how Secretaries from both sides of the political spectrum can make significant contributions to promoting a democracy that is fair, open and accountable.

Benson lives in Detroit with her husband, Ryan Friedrichs.

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