

Some political races are getting more interesting for who's not running than for who is. In several races these past few days, prominent politicians have ended their candidacies: In the New York 23rd Congressional race, to fill the seat vacated by Republican John McHugh, Dede Scozzafava, the Republican establishment candidate yesterday dropped out of the race after taking a drubbing in recent polls and suffering the indignity of several party leaders, such as Sarah Palin, endorsing her Conservative Party opponent, Doug Hoffman (who, interestingly enough, doesn't even live in the district). Today Scozzafava has gone a step further, endorsing her Democratic former competitor, Bill Owens.

In the Wisconsin Governor's race, wide open for the first time in over 30 years as sitting Gov. Jim Doyle, a Democrat, has decided not to run, the latest person to make news for not running is Doyle's Lieutenant Governor, Barbara Lawton. She joins expected candidate Congressman Ron Kind (D, La Crosse) in sitting this one out. That leaves an unknown [Jared Christiansen](#) as the only declared candidate for the Democratic nomination, though many expect Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett to jump into the race soon.

In the California Governor's race, San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom has dropped out, leaving no announced candidates for that state's Democratic nomination for term limited Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's seat. Many expect that former Governor, former Oakland Mayor and current Attorney General Jerry Brown will run. He has an exploratory committee already up and running and has nearly \$8 million in the bank already. Some also suspect that Senator and former San Francisco mayor Diane Feinstein may jump into the race to avoid a potentially pricey defense of her Senate seat against former Hewlett Packard CEO, and John McCain campaign surrogate, Carly Fiorino.

In Afghanistan's contentious Presidential runoffs, currently scheduled for next weekend, Hamid Karzai opponent and former Foreign Minister, Abdullah Abdullah, has stepped down, complaining that with no real electoral reforms instituted in the wake of August's sham election (in which fully 30% of Karzai's votes, 1.3 million ballots, were set aside due to fraud), and the electoral commission still being run by the same people, those appointed to their jobs by Karzai. This leaves the Obama administration in the uncomfortable position of having to decide whether to continue to support a demonstrably undemocratic and corrupt regime.

All in all a bunch of interesting developments for the final week of October, 2009.