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**ANALYSIS OF STATEWIDE VOTERS
THURSDAY, MARCH 3 THROUGH
SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2010
600 SAMPLE, PLUS/MINUS 4%**

SUMMARY

With 7 in 10 respondents supporting a voting reform package, that would include early and no excuse absentee voting, it is clear that Michigan voters want reform. Respondents want a package of reform that would make it more convenient for them to vote and offer better ways for people to complete their civic duty.

Voters are split when forced to make a preference between the two proposals. It is clear that voters desire the passage of any reform that would make voting more convenient for them. While it is interesting to gauge voter preference of each proposal it may be beneficial to include both in any potential reform package.

When read a battery of statements in support of voting reform we find that voters respond positively to each, with four out of six statements holding support of over 70%. The strongest hitting statement was one that spoke of convenience. With 75% of respondents more likely to vote for a package after hearing that statement it is clear that voters are simply interested in government making voting more convenient for them to complete.

Support for voting reform that includes early and no excuse absentee voting grew to 77% after respondents heard the battery of statements. The statements in support of this package were clearly able to move some of the initial opposition as we find that 4% of those initially opposed were swayed to be somewhat supportive. Additionally, after being read the positive statements, respondents continued to be split on their preference of reform. This result further enforces the recommendation to include both reforms into one package.

While there will certainly be some opposition to any reform package, the threat of fraud is not taken very seriously. With two thirds believing election fraud is not a significant issue, it will be important to conduct further research that delves into potential negatives to see how any may sway support.

It is interesting to note that nearly every respondent had an opinion on voting reform. With only 4% of voters initially stating that they were unsure as to whether they would support voting reform this is clearly an issue that is on the minds of voters. Any campaign wanting to enact these reforms, while needing a strong voter education program, will find that voting reform is both on the minds of voters and would be received positively.

ANALYSIS

Voting Reform – Initial Support

Michigan voters overwhelmingly support reform whether it includes early or no excuse voting. **With 7 in 10 supporting reform and only a quarter of voters opposing, it is clear that residents want the state to make it more convenient for them to vote and offer better ways to complete their civic duty.**

It is, however, interesting to note where the support and opposition comes from. Strongest support comes from voters identifying themselves within both the Democratic Party as well as Independents, however we find that 46% of voters identifying themselves as Strong Republicans oppose any reforms.

- ✓ Strong Democrats – 86% total support
- ✓ Weak Democrats – 81% total support
- ✓ Independents – 77% total support

We find that, while both genders generally supported reform, men (32%) were slightly more likely to oppose election reform than women (18%).

Geographically, while all regions support reform, we find that voters in Central Michigan (86% total support), Wayne County (79%) and the Tri-City/Thumb area (77%) were highly supportive. Conversely, we find that voters in Oakland County (41% total oppose), Macomb (32%), West (31%) and Upper Lower MI (30%) were most likely to hold opposition to reform.

The issue is voter turnout in Michigan elections. The state legislature is considering a package of bills that would include two significant reforms – early voting, which means allowing qualified voters to vote in the days preceding Election Day; and “no excuse” absentee voting, which means any qualified voter can vote by absentee ballot for any reason. Both of these reforms are designed to make voting more convenient, and therefore improve the possibility for more Michigan citizens to participate.

*Knowing this, do you Strongly Support, Somewhat Support, Somewhat Oppose or Strongly Oppose “early voting” and “no excuse” absentee voting as reforms to encourage voter participation in Michigan?”*Low base size.*

Q11	Total
TOTAL SUPPORT	70
Strongly Support	42
Somewhat Support	28
TOTAL OPPOSE	25
Somewhat Oppose	10
Strongly Oppose	15
Neither Oppose nor Support	1
Don't Know	4

As you can see, more than 70% of all voters and, amazingly, at least 55% of EVERY demographic segment identified in the survey – whether it be gender, partisan affiliation, age, geography, ethnicity, frequency of absentee voting, occupation and the presence of children in a household -- favored a package including *both* reforms.

Demographic Group	Support for Both Reforms
Central Michigan	89%
Democrats	84%
Blue Collar	80%
Wayne County (less Detroit)	79%
Southeast Michigan	78%
African American	77%
Stay-at-home Moms/Dads	77%
Independents	77%
Tri-Cities/Thumb	77%
Females	76%
50-64 years old	75%
Vote Absentee in all elections	75%
City of Detroit	73%
Upper Peninsula	72%
Households with children	72%
18-34 years old	72%
Households without children	70%
Caucasian	70%
35-49 years old	69%
Retired	68%
White Collar	67%
Never vote absentee	67%
65+	66%
Macomb County	65%
West Michigan	64%
Males	63%
Republicans	60%
Upper Lower Peninsula	59%
Oakland County	55%

As this chart clearly shows, support for election reforms are across the board – universal. With support from 7 of 10 Michigan voters, quite frankly, you’d be hard pressed to find many issues with greater favorability.

Preference of Reform

Respondents are split over which reform they would prefer when asked to chose between early or no excuse voting. It is clear that voters desire the passage of any reform that would make voting more convenient, especially the two reforms presented before them.

While respondents were generally split as to what they would prefer there are some interesting results demographically that include:

- ✓ 62% of African American respondents preferred early voting.
- ✓ 60% of respondents that reported they were stay at home mom/dad’s preferred no excuse absentee voting.
- ✓ 56% of voters age 18-34 would prefer no excuse absentee voting while 54% of voters age 35-49 would prefer early voting.

It is of note that there were no glaring differences in preference across geographic regions. A majority of voters in each region of the state were split when asked to pick a preference.

Based on your current understanding of these reforms, if you had to choose one, which would you prefer to see passed by the state legislature – “early voting” or “no excuse” absentee voting?

Q12	Total	Gender		Age				Ethnicity	
		Male	Female	18-34*	35-49	50-64	65+	White	African-American*
Early Voting	46	48	44	38	54	44	46	45	62
No Excuse Absentee Voting	47	44	49	56	41	49	44	47	33
No Preference	4	5	3	6	1	5	4	4	0
Don't Know	4	4	4	0	4	3	5	3	5

**Low base size. Results should be considered directional.*

Statements on Reform

Each of the statements in support of voting reform was positively received, with four of the six statements garnering additional support of over 70%. **Convenience in voting is the strongest hitting statement with 75% of respondents stating that they are more likely to vote for reform that would make it more convenient for them to vote.**

It is interesting to find that, while still positively received, only 62% of respondents would be more likely to support a reform package based on endorsements. **It seems that voters are more interested in the actual reform taking place and how it will affect them rather than which organization supports it.**

*Knowing this, are you more or less likely to support the election reform package? (If **More Likely** – ask if that would be Much More Likely or Somewhat More Likely? If **Less Likely** – ask if that would be Much Less Likely or Somewhat Less Likely?)*

Q13 - Q18 Ranked by Total More Likely	Convenience	Other States	No Rush	Administrative Ease	Barriers	Endorsements
TOTAL MORE LIKELY	75	73	70	70	67	62
Much More Likely	40	41	41	37	32	28
Somewhat More Likely	35	32	29	33	35	34
TOTAL LESS LIKELY	18	19	22	20	23	22
Somewhat Less Likely	8	9	11	11	11	14
Much Less Likely	10	10	11	9	12	8
No Difference	3	6	4	3	4	11
Don't Know	5	3	3	8	7	5

Statements:

Convenience: Whether it's because of working longer hours, supporting our kids' activities, searching for employment or other personal commitments – we're all busier than ever. As a result, we need to make it more convenient for folks to vote, ensuring that all Michigan voices can be heard on Election Day.

Other States: Other states have already signed on to these reforms in an attempt to increase voter turnout and make it more convenient to participate. In fact, 32 other states already offer early voting, and another 28 allow “no excuse” absentee voting. In these states, in 2008, nearly one-third of all votes were cast early, and most of the early voters were women and people over the age of 50.

No Rush: Many people complain about being rushed in the voting booth on Election Day – and with so many issues on the ballot these days, it’s hard to know enough about them to make informed decisions. These reforms will ease Election Day lines, allow people more time to vote, and therefore make more informed voting decisions.

Endorsements: Election reforms like “early voting” and “no excuse” absentee voting have been endorsed in Michigan by election experts and administrators, such as Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, the Municipal Clerks Association, and the League of Women Voters.

Administrative Ease: Reforms like “early voting” and “no excuse” absentee voting will ease the administrative challenges local clerks face when conducting elections – leading to greater efficiencies, long-term cost savings and lower-cost elections.

Barriers: State government has a fundamental obligation to remove the barriers that are keeping qualified voters from voting. These reforms are long overdue, and if passed, will go a long ways towards increasing voter turnout and creating a better informed electorate, resulting in greater accountability for elected officials.

Election Reform Support – Post Statements

We find that after hearing a batter of positive statements, overall support for the voting reform package increases by 7% bringing total support of this package to 77%. **The statements in support of this package were clearly able to move some of the initial opposition as we find that 4% of those initially opposed were swayed to be somewhat supportive.**

- ✓ If a campaign to enact these reforms were to be undertaken, a voter education campaign would be advisable considering the statements were able to sway 4% of the opposition.

When it comes to support or opposition to issues like these, people often change their minds once they learn more. Now that you’ve learned more about the “early voting” and “no excuse” absentee voting election reforms, do you Strongly Support, Somewhat Support, Somewhat Oppose or Strongly Oppose the measures?

Q19	Total - Post Statements	Total - Initial Support	Change
TOTAL SUPPORT	77	70	+ 7
Strongly Support	41	42	- 1
Somewhat Support	36	28	+ 8
TOTAL OPPOSE	21	25	- 4
Somewhat Oppose	9	10	- 1
Strongly Oppose	12	15	- 3
Neither Support nor Oppose	1	1	0
Don't Know	2	4	- 2

Preference of Reform – Post Statements

Following the statements giving voters some additional information on the two potential reforms we find that “early voting” (48%) seems to hold a slight edge over “no excuse absentee voting” (44%). While voters would clearly support either, they are also split as to which they would prefer. **It is clear that any campaign to enact voting reform should consider these both as a package of reforms instead of separately advocating for one or the other.**

Again, people often change their minds on issues -- if you had to choose again, which of the two proposed reforms would be most important to you – “early voting” or “no excuse” absentee voting?

Q20	Total	Gender		Age				Ethnicity	
		Male	Female	18-34*	35-49	50-64	65+	White	African-American*
Early Voting	48	51	45	44	51	48	49	47	62
Change from Initial	2	3	1	6	-3	4	3	2	0
No Excuse Absentee Voting	44	40	47	53	46	46	40	45	36
Change from Initial	-3	-4	-2	-3	5	-3	-4	-2	3
No Preference	4	5	3	3	4	4	5	4	3
Don't Know	4	3	4	0	0	2	6	4	0

**Low base size. Results should be considered directional.*

Reform Increases Turnout or Induces Fraud?

Respondents clearly believe that voting reforms do not induce fraud in elections. **With 66% of voters believing this to be the case, it is clear that any opposition trying to scare voters by inciting the potential of fraud would be unsuccessful.**

While the worry of fraud is not a significant issue across all demographics, it is interesting to note that some groups are slightly more worried about fraud than others.

- ✓ 41% of Strong Republicans state that reforms lead to fraud
- ✓ 33% of Detroiters state that reforms lead to fraud
- ✓ 31% of Oakland County voters state that reforms lead to fraud

While the threat of fraud will always be in question – when considering reforms, it will be important for any campaign to fall back on the security of elections, both statewide and locally, that is already in place. Reform makes voting more convenient and increases turnout – nothing else.

Now I'm going to read you two positions on election reform, please tell me which one comes closest to your own view. Adopting reforms that increase voter turnout also lead to an increase in fraud and other abuses of election law. OR While fraud is always a concern, based on the fact that other states who have enacted “early voting” and “no excuse” absentee voting reforms have reported no increase in abuses or violations of election law, local election experts believe it is not going to be a significant issue. Again, which of these two positions comes closest to your own view that reforms lead to fraud or that fraud is not going to be a significant issue?

Q21	Total	Gender		Age				Ethnicity	
		Male	Female	18-34*	35-49	50-64	65+	White	African-American*
Reforms lead to fraud	26	30	23	25	23	24	29	25	23
Fraud not significant issue	66	64	68	75	72	71	60	68	72
Don't Know/Refused	8	6	9	0	5	5	11	7	5

Methodology:

These questions were part of the Rossman Group/Perricone Group/Denno Noor Research Quarterly Survey of the Michigan electorate. 600 respondents the state of Michigan were surveyed between March 3 through March 5, 2010, with a margin of error of plus/minus 4%, and the participation was stratified based on census data and past voter behavior. A screen was employed to include only those participants who said they would vote, either at the polls or by absentee ballot, in the November 2010 General Election. All numbers are rounded and may exceed 100%.