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Friday, March 27, 2015

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Prop 1 Opposition At 55% In New MIRS Poll

After months of discussion and three weeks of advertising, 55 percent of likely Michigan voters remain opposed to the May 5 road funding proposal, according to a new poll commissioned by Michigan Information & Research Service Inc. (MIRS) and conducted by Target Insyght.

The opposition number mirrors findings of an April 2014 Target Insyght survey conducted for MIRS that found 55 percent opposed to dedicating a one percent increase in the state's sales tax for a permanent road funding fix.

“Nothing has changed, we still have about 55 percent of voters that are leaning no on this ballot proposal,” said Ed SARPOLUS, of Target Insyght. “So after a year, the priority for voters of solving the road funding problem is not there.”

Sarpolus contends the door isn't closed on the possible passage of Proposal 1 with five and a half weeks remaining, but the campaign may need to sound different messages through different messengers to achieve success on May 5.

“It comes down to who the messenger is and solving their credibility problem,” Sarpolus said. “It's also not just about TV, it's about grass roots. They have to get the coalition activated at the grass roots level. Right now the Governor is the only messenger. He's like a quarterback that shows up for the game, but there's no team. He needs a team around him to get the message out.”

The number of those opposed rises to 65 percent after poll participants were read the actual ballot language. Those supporting the proposal after the ballot language was heard dropped from 36 percent to 29 percent.

The survey of 700 registered voters was conducted Tuesday and Wednesday and included voters who indicated they're likely to vote on the May 5 proposal. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.64 percent.

The first question the survey posed was “based on what you know, read, seen, discussed or heard about the statewide ballot proposal to provide additional money for roads and if the election were held today” how would you vote? In response, 36 percent say they'd vote yes, 55 percent no with nine percent undecided.

After being asked their initial reaction and then read the ballot language, participants were then provided a longer explanation of what the proposed constitutional amendment would do including restrictions on school aid fund usage, changes in sales tax application to fuel purchases and alterations to how the state taxes diesel fuel and gasoline.

Following the longer explanation, 28 percent said they supported the proposal, 63 percent said they were opposed with nine percent undecided.

The MIRS/Target Insight survey also questioned voters whether they'd seen commercials supporting or opposing the May 5 road funding proposal.

A total of 72 percent said they'd seen television or heard radio ads supporting the proposal. Some 21 percent said they'd seen television or heard radio ads opposing the proposal. Interestingly, the cross tabs show that 51 percent of those that indicated they had not been exposed to any messages about the proposal -- for or against -- would vote yes.

Among independents, 66 percent are opposed to the plan. Democrats appear to be the most receptive, with 45 percent saying they plan to vote yes and 44 percent planning to vote no.

Women are more likely to support the plan (38 percent) than men (33 percent). On a regional basis, the Traverse City region appears to be the most inclined toward the plan. A total of 49 percent of Traverse City media market registered voters indicated they were a yes vote, while 43 percent were no when first asked about the plan.

On the first question, the Detroit and Flint media markets had 58 percent of voters opposed while the Lansing media market had 47 percent opposed and Grand Rapids had 53 percent opposed.

Question wording and results can be downloaded [here](#).

Cross tabs can be downloaded [here](#).

Could All Four Michigan Living Governors Sell Prop 1?

In reviewing the findings of this week's survey for MIRS, Sarpolus argued that a new messenger or messengers might be needed to close the deal. His argument that Gov. Rick SNYDER will only go so far with voters and that a trusted Democrat, in particular, would be helpful in generating more support.

“In Southeast Michigan, you could have (Detroit Mayor) Mike DUGGAN or Macomb County Executive Mark HACKEL because they're very credible in their communities. (Executive) Brooks PATTERSON in Oakland County.”

MIRS asked, could former Gov. James BLANCHARD be convincing?

“I think there are people in the UP that still love Governor Blanchard,” Sarpolus said. “He's not as active as he used to be around the state.”

MIRS then asked, what about all four living Michigan governors coming out in support -- would that move the needle?

“That would be great, that would be helpful,” he said. “Let me explain how important that is. If you look back to '94 [Proposal A] there was a message, ‘We must do this.’ Having four governors, bipartisan from many decades, then you're going to have a unified message that, ‘We have to do this’.”