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DATE: June 3, 2019

TO: Interested parties

FROM: Ben Lazarus and Gabby Weisberg, TargetSmart

RE: Key Findings from Michigan Statewide Poll for the State Innovation Exchange (SiX)

Executive Summary

Our recent multi-mode statewide survey¹ paints the picture of a Michigan electorate hungry for concrete improvements in the everyday life of the average person and their family. From safe, modern roads to affordable auto insurance, prescription drugs, and doctor's visits, Michiganders prioritize tangible impacts that help working people. Moreover, Michigan voters see a clear role for government in delivering these improvements and more broadly providing opportunities that help working families.

At the same time, Michigan voters thoroughly reject supply-side rhetoric around government spending, taxes, and regulating industry. Instead, a populist bent runs through this dataset, materializing in strongly negative feelings about big banks and drug companies, a broad openness to filling the state's coffers using more progressive revenue streams, and a clear sense that government has a role to play in enacting policies that help working families.

This memo will focus on the economic topics covered in this research and provide an overview of the core policy priorities expressed by Michigan voters.

Policy Priorities for the Michigan State Legislature

In concert with other recent publicly available polling data, an open-ended exercise in which voters are asked to name the biggest policy issue that they would like the Michigan State Legislature to focus on reveals substantial concern about the state's roads and associated high costs for auto insurance. A separate priorities exercise, administered over the phone, suggests that clean, safe drinking water, along with health care costs, taxes, education, and the economy are also top priorities for Michigan voters.

We find that health care and prescription drug costs, as well as retirement security, tend to be Michigan voters' most acute economic anxieties. So, while concerns about roads are certainly profound, it is clear from this data that a significant marketplace exists for an economic agenda that not only calls for more investment in infrastructure, but also more broadly prioritizes policies that open up opportunity for working families and make their lives tangibly better.

Widespread Support for Progressive Economic Agenda Among Michigan Voters

Michigan voters generally agree more with a progressive vision for state government's role in society and often look at economic issues and policies through a populist lens. Although the data reveals that voters express some level of tax sensitivity, a majority of voters find more value in a government that

¹ See Appendix for survey methodology.

provides opportunity and protections over small government that continually cuts taxes. What's more, to a near unanimous extent, voters are willing to pay their fair share in taxes as long as everyone else does the same. This overriding sense of fairness fuels attitudes that corporations and the wealthy have dodged their tax responsibilities for far too long and need to be held accountable for unfair practices, such as employee misclassification and payroll fraud.

Relatedly, progressive employment and wage policies are overwhelmingly popular among Michigan voters. Nine-in-ten voters agree that people who work over forty hours a week should be eligible for overtime pay and more than three quarters of Michigan voters believe employers should be required to close the gender pay gap. Overwhelming majorities also support paid sick and family leave time so people can care for loved ones or new children without being penalized at the workplace.

Michigan voters also demonstrate substantial openness to new revenues, from transitioning the state to a progressive, graduated income tax to reversing corporate tax cuts.

Pocketbook Health Care Priorities and Support for Women's Reproductive Freedom

Health care ranks near the top of the priority list for Michigan voters, and this poll finds that concerns over out of pocket costs for things like prescription drugs and insurance premiums tend to trump other health care related issues including the high-profile opioid crisis. However, the data also underscores a strong aversion to any kind of abortion ban, as more than six-in-ten support efforts to ensure abortion remains legal in Michigan regardless of what happens at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Conclusion

The big picture takeaways from this survey tend to revolve around pragmatism and populism. Voters are tired of seeing big banks book record profits while the streets they drive on every day are riddled with potholes. Their frustrations are easy to observe when they can't afford their prescription drugs or their newly hiked up auto insurance bill but see pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies doing better than ever. Public opinion calls for an agenda that ensures everyone pays their fair share, corporations are held accountable, and state government provides opportunities that proactively make life better for working Michiganders.

Survey Methodology

TargetSmart designed and administered this multi-modal survey. Five-hundred interviews were conducted via professional telephone agents (330 wireless respondents, 170 landline respondents) from May 14-23, and 509 interviews were conducted online among panelists who were matched to the TargetSmart voter file from six opt-in panel providers from May 5-23. All respondents indicated they were 18 years or older and registered to vote in Michigan. Quotas were designed to reflect the demographic and geographic distribution of registered voters in Michigan. The data were weighted by gender, age, race, TargetSmart Partisan Score, TargetSmart High School Only Score, and region by county and county council district to ensure an accurate reflection of the population.

The margin of error for the phone data collected is +/- 4.4%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies. No margins of sampling error are calculated for the online data collection, as this statistic is only applicable to fully randomly sampled surveys, which this survey is not due to its reliance on non-representative opt-in panels. Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.