

targetsmart



DATE: June 24, 2019

TO: Interested parties

FROM: Ben Lazarus and Gabby Weisberg, TargetSmart

RE: Democracy and Voting Reform Findings from Michigan Statewide Poll for the State Innovation Exchange (SiX)

This memo will focus on the democracy and voting reform policies covered our recent multi-modal statewide survey¹ and provide insights on where divisions in public opinion are most profound.

Voting Reform

Broadly, these findings echo an openness to ensuring voting is more accessible to all eligible voters in Michigan. Michigan voters are supportive of efforts to make voting more convenient, through both automatic vote by mail and 14 days of early in-person voting. At the same time, voters express intense concerns about election security and want to see protections against hacking and interference through social media put into place.

Democracy Reform

Across the board, voters are very supportive of policies that take money out of politics. Creating new transparency and ethics rules for lobbyists and bans on dark money are highly prioritized by Michiganders across the partisan and ideological spectrums. That said, personal financial disclosure requirements for candidates and elected officials is overall lower on voters' priorities list and much more polarized along partisan lines – Democrats rank it as their top priority, while independents and Republicans rank it as their bottom priority.

Relatedly, voters want to reduce corruption and increase transparency and accountability in government. Getting rid of corrupt politicians surfaces as the most profound concern as it relates to government reform, though goals like getting big money out of politics and increasing government transparency are strongly supported by Michigan voters.

Conclusion

This research reveals a large marketplace for progressive priorities around vote-by-mail, in-person early voting, and limiting money's influence in politics in Michigan. While voters are open to ensuring that voting is more accessible to all eligible voters, they want to ensure elections are secure and free from outside interference. Furthermore, voters across the partisan spectrum highly prioritize getting money out of politics and increasing government transparency, revealing a consensus around strengthening democracy, and eliminating corruption in government.

¹ See appendix A for full survey methodology.

Appendix A – 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.