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Michigan Voters Place Importance on Mids, Especially Dems...
Stabenow Leads Potential GOP Opponents by Double Digits...
Whitmer with Advantage Against Schuette in Race for Gov

For Immediate Release

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This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

In Michigan, where Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton by a little less than 11,000 votes in the 2016 presidential election, registered voters statewide tell the NBC News/Marist Poll that the midterm elections are very important, they plan to send a message to Congress, and they prefer Democratic control of Congress. Many Michigan residents do not perceive President Donald Trump in a positive light. His job approval rating is upside down, and a majority thinks he does not deserve to be re-elected.

69% of voters statewide consider this November's elections to be *very* important. Among all key groups, at least six in ten registered voters place a great deal of weight on the significance of the upcoming midterm elections. Democrats are especially mobilized with 82% saying November's elections are critical. 66% of Republicans agree.

Most registered voters statewide also report their vote will send a message, and a majority (53%) say that message will convey more Democrats are needed to be a check and balance on President Trump. 33% want their ballot to communicate more Republicans are needed to help pass the president's agenda. 92% of Democrats perceive a need to balance presidential power. More than three in four GOP'ers (78%) consider this election an opportunity to advance the president's agenda, although 10% of Republicans are unsure about the message their vote will send. Of note, there is a significant gender gap on this question. While women (60% to 25%) prominently report their vote will be a check on the president, men divide (46% to 41%).

When asked their preference, a plurality of Michigan registered voters (45%) say they would like

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the Democrats to control Congress. 36% want the Republicans to maintain control, and a notable 19% are unsure. A clear partisan divide exists, and independents are a force. Among independent voters, 36% prefer Democratic control, 28% favor Republican control, and more than one in three (36%) are unsure. There is a 28-point gender gap on this question. Women prefer Democratic control (51% to 29%) of Congress. Among men, Republicans (44%) have the edge over Democrats (38%).

When looking at the generic congressional ballot, 49% of Michigan registered voters say they are more likely to vote for the Democrat in their district. 36% are more inclined to support the Republican, 5% support another candidate, and 11% are undecided. Again, independents and women matter. 41% of independents back the Democrat, and 29% support the Republican in their district. One in five (20%) is undecided. By nearly two to one, women support the Democratic candidate (56%) compared with 29% for the Republican. Men divide, 41% for the Democrat to 42% for the Republican.

“Michigan looks very different for the midterm elections than it did in 2016,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Democrats are benefitting from enthusiasm, a wide gender gap, and independents leaning their way.”

In 2012, Democratic Senator Debbie Stabenow won re-election by 21 points, and she is well-positioned to hold onto her Senate seat. In a hypothetical matchup, Stabenow (55%) leads Republican John James (37%) by 18 points among registered voters statewide. Stabenow (52%) leads Sandy Pensler (37%) by 15 points.

In August’s Republican primary for U.S. Senate, James (30%) has a narrow advantage over Pensler (23%) among the potential Republican electorate including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. But nearly half (46%) of potential Republican voters are undecided and even among those with a candidate preference only 34% report they strongly support their choice. 37% of James’ supporters express a firm commitment to him compared with 30% of Pensler’s backers.

In a hypothetical matchup in Michigan’s gubernatorial contest, Democrat Gretchen Whitmer (47%) leads Republican Bill Schuette (38%) among registered voters statewide to replace term-limited Governor Snyder. 14% are undecided.

Whitmer and Schuette still need to win their respective party’s nomination with significant proportions of each electorate still undecided. On the Democratic side, Whitmer (31%) is closely matched with Shri Thanedar (27%) among the potential Democratic electorate including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Abdul El-Sayed (22%) follows. 20% are undecided. 52% of the potential Democratic electorate with a candidate preference in the gubernatorial race say they strongly support their candidate. Identical proportions of Whitmer’s

(53%) and Thanedar's (53%) backers say they are firmly committed to them. 49% of El-Sayed's supporters strongly support him.

On the Republican side, Schuette (33%) narrowly edges Brian Calley (26%) among the potential Republican electorate including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Patrick Colbeck receives 11%, and 30% are undecided. Only 35% of the potential Republican electorate with a candidate preference for governor say they strongly support their choice. 39% of Schuette's supporters strongly support him compared with 29% of Calley's supporters.

"The primaries for both party nominations for governor are very competitive," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Voters have not settled on their choice making for a fluid situation."

President Trump's approval rating among Michigan residents is underwater. 35% approve and 53% disapprove. The proportion of those who strongly disapprove (42%) of the job Trump is doing is nearly double that of those who strongly approve (22%). Nearly two-thirds of Michigan adults (64%) do not think President Trump deserves to be re-elected in 2020, including 22% of Republicans.

39% of Michigan residents say the economy is on the upswing and believe the president deserves some credit for that improvement. 24% think the economy has improved, but do not give Trump credit. An additional 30% do not think the economy is doing better.

A majority of Michigan adults (52%), including 23% of Republicans, think Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 presidential election is fair. 30% of Michigan adults, overall, say the investigation is a "witch hunt," including 62% of GOP'ers.