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Poll shows majority of Michigan voters want policymakers to focus on bipartisanship, invest in areas that help the state compete to win

- *Voters strongly support Michigan offering incentives to land large scale economic development projects*
- *61% of voters say a state's position on social issues an important factor in deciding where to live*
- *Voters cautious on repealing 3rd grade reading law which requires a child to repeat 3rd grade if they struggle with literacy*

DETROIT – A majority of Michigan voters across the political spectrum want lawmakers to pursue bipartisanship and focus on issues that are a priority for most Michiganders, such as providing adequate, equitable funding for K-12 public schools, increasing the Earned Income Tax credit, investing in infrastructure and providing incentives to attract new jobs and businesses, according to a poll commissioned by Business Leaders for Michigan released Wednesday.

With Democrats in control of both legislative chambers and the governor's office for the first time in 40 years, nearly 55% of voters believe the new majorities should focus on bipartisan policies that bring Michiganders together, while just 20% say Democrats should focus on undoing policies put in place by Republicans over the past four decades.

Voters ranked adequate, equitable funding for K-12 public schools as their highest spending priority for Michigan's budget surplus, followed by additional money for roads and bridges.

In addition, 76% of voters support Michigan offering incentive packages to land large scale economic development projects. The Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve fund (SOAR) has brought 12,000 jobs and \$17 billion in direct private investment to Michigan since it was approved with bipartisan support in December 2021.

Business Leaders for Michigan's latest benchmarking shows the state went from being ranked 49th coming out of the Great Recession to 29th in 2021, though it slipped to 31st last year.

"Michigan has made progress in recent years toward becoming a more competitive state by focusing

on bipartisan solutions to some of our most pressing issues. Voters recognize the importance of investing and planning for future growth,” said Jeff Donofrio, president and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan. “Michigan’s competitors aren’t waiting around for us, and if we don’t come together and act, they will leave us in the dust.

More than 60% of voters say a state’s policies on social issues, such as LGBTQ+ rights, are an important factor in deciding whether or not to take an attractive job in that state. They are a significant consideration for attracting young talent, with 63% of college-educated voters saying social issues are very important or somewhat important, and between 66% - 70% of those age 18-39 saying social issues are very important or somewhat important.

The survey also signaled that policymakers considering changes to the 3rd grade reading law would need to make a stronger case to voters. When asked if they favor Michigan’s third grade reading law, which requires a child to be held back if they are unable to read by the end of third grade 73% voters support the law to 22% oppose.

“If we hope to make long lasting changes to our K-12 system that will put Michigan’s kids on a better trajectory, we need to continue to bring people together and take a holistic approach,” Donofrio said. “Michigan schools rank 40th for educational outcomes, and our high school graduation rate is 42nd in the country. We need to do better by our kids.”

Other top findings include:

- 45% of Michigan voters believe the state is on the right track compared to 40% who say it is on the wrong track; 14% did not offer an opinion
- 37% of voters believe Michigan’s economy is on the right track compared to 51% who believe it is on the wrong track
- 46% of voters say their household personally was doing the same, nearly 37% said it was doing worse and 16% of voters said it was doing better
- 55.5% of Michigan voters approve of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s performance with 39.4% disapproving; these numbers have been consistent since Fall 2021
- Ranking of potential funding priorities for Michigan’s budget surplus on a one to 10 scale. (The higher the number, the higher the priority.):

7.9	Adequate, equitable funding for K-12 public schools
7.8	Increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit for lower- and middle-income families.
7.6	Additional money to repair roads and bridges.
7.4	Incentives to help Michigan beat other states in attracting new good paying jobs.
7.4	Help adult workers get the education/training that leads to a better job/ better wages.
7.4	Paying down public-school debt so more education dollars go directly to the classroom.
7.0	Money for the state’s Rainy-Day Fund so that taxes won’t need to be raised in a recession.
6.9	Universal pre-school for all Michigan four-year-olds.
6.8	A permanent cut in the state income tax.

6.3 Helping people start their own business here in Michigan.

- Voters were asked which of the 10 funding priorities was their highest priority:

23.6%	Adequate funding for K-12 public schools.
13.5%	Additional money for roads and bridges.
13.3%	Permanent cut in the state income tax.
8.0%	Setting aside money in the State's Rainy-Day Fund.
7.8%	Increasing tax credits for working families.
7.5%	Universal Pre-K for all four-year olds.
7.3%	Helping people start their own business.
5.3%	Incentives to help Michigan beat other states for jobs.
5.1%	Helping adult workers with education/training.
4.0%	Paying down public-school debt.

The Glengariff Group, Inc. conducted the Michigan statewide survey of registered voters. The 600 sample, live operator telephone survey was conducted on January 28-February 2, 2023, and has a margin of error of +/-4.0% with a 95% level of confidence. 26.0% of respondents were contacted via landline telephone. 74.0% of respondents were contacted via cell phone telephone. This survey was commissioned by Business Leaders for Michigan.

About Business Leaders for Michigan:

Business Leaders for Michigan, the state's business roundtable, is dedicated to making Michigan a Top 10 state for jobs, education, widely shared prosperity and a healthy economy. The organization is composed exclusively of the executive leaders of Michigan's largest companies and universities. Our members drive 40% of the state's economy, generate over \$1 trillion in annual revenue and serve more than half of all Michigan public university students. Find out more at www.businessleadersformichigan.com.