

INSIDE MICHIGAN POLITICS

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March 20, 2006

Vol. X, No. 32

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BUT ARGUMENTS AGAINST BOTH SHOULD BE TAUGHT, TOO: POLL**

Maybe all that early TV advertising by **Dick DeVos** has paid off --- voters say the millionaire businessman from West Michigan has surged into a virtual tie with incumbent Gov. **Jennifer Granholm** if the 2006 gubernatorial election were being held today. About one voter in six is undecided, refuses to answer, or says s/he doesn't know (U/RtA/DK).

Actually, Granholm's support has dropped as sharply as DeVos's has increased since all other polls that have been taken of the match-up dating back to the fall of 2004, including a couple as recently as this month.

A March 5-8 EPIC/MRA poll showed DeVos trailing Granholm, 51%-41%. A Strategic Visions survey taken March 10-12 showed the Governor with the same kind of double-digit lead over DeVos she's held for the past year and a half, 50%-33%.

Those days appear to be gone, according to a statewide survey commissioned by **Inside Michigan Politics** and conducted by Lansing-based Marketing Resource Group, Inc., between March 13 and 17. The poll sampled 600 registered voters stratified by city and/or township, based on past voting history. 34% of the respondents are behavioral Democrats; 28% behavioral Republicans; 36% are ticket-splitters; and about 2% refused to characterize their voting habits or had never voted before. Statistical margin of error (MOE) is $\pm 4.1\%$.

MRG is the state's oldest and most reliable polling organization on Michigan issues and political races. **IMP**, founded in 1987, is the largest-circulation bi-weekly, state-based political newsletter in North America.

The survey also found that Michigan voters:

- Give incumbent Republican Attorney General **Mike Cox**, who won by a razor-thin 5,200 votes in 2002, a narrow 33%-25% lead over the potential

Democratic nominee with the highest name ID, **Scott Bowen**, a former Kent Co. district judge.

- Secretary of State **Terri Lynn Land** is in a stronger position for re-election than Cox. She boasts a 17% lead over the only announced candidate for the Democratic nomination, state Rep. **Mary Waters** of Detroit

- Voters are just about as supportive of the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative as they were two years ago, by a margin of 55%-36% (9% U/RtA/DK).

- Maybe Lansing politicians aren't as unpopular and untrustworthy as we think --- by a relatively narrow 53%-42% margin, voters say they trust "state lawmakers in Lansing" to set curriculum requirements for Michigan's public high schools rather than "your local school board."

- A whopping majority of Michigan voters say they support a bill introduced by state Rep. **Jack Hoogendyk** (R-Kalamazoo) that would designate English as the official language of Michigan.

- Voters are more divided on the question of whether to repeal the state's controversial Single Business Tax (SBT) than on any other question in the 2006 **IMP/MRG** Spring Poll --- 40% say they'd vote to abolish the levy if it's on the Nov. 7 general election ballot, but 33% say they would vote "No" and a hefty 27% are U/RtA/DK.

- Three-quarters of the state's voters agree that global warming is a "very serious" or "somewhat serious" problem, but they also believe that all theories relating to the cause of rising temperatures around the world should be taught in schools --- not just the hypothesis that the phenomenon is occurring because of "increased carbon dioxide and other gases released into the atmosphere."

- Fewer than one voter in five think that only **Charles Darwin's** theory of evolution should be taught

by high school biology teachers; more than three out of four voters believe that Darwin's theory should be accompanied by instruction by the same teachers on the scientific evidence against it.

The **IMP/MRG** poll consisted of 16-minute interviews conducted by survey staff from East Lansing. The survey's cross-tabs broke responses down into more than a dozen categories, i.e., geography, gender, marital and housing status, income level, ideology, education, union affiliation, age, religion, etc.

For reasons of space, **IMP** could not include all cross-tab data in this issue. As always, however, we'll supply a complete set of cross-tabs on any question to any subscriber or member of the news media who requests them.

GRANHOLM vs. DEVOS: GOVERNOR'S NUMBERS PLUMMET

Gov. **Jennifer Granholm's** job and personal approval ratings are both down from where they were last fall and a year ago, according to the **IMP/MRG** poll.

Fewer than half the state's electorate (48%) approve of the job she's doing as Governor; nearly as many (43%) disapprove. While she's known by virtually everybody (99%), only 48% view her favorably. 42% have an unfavorable opinion of Granholm.

Last fall, by contrast, her job and approval numbers were 56% and 54%, respectively --- virtually the same as they were a year ago. But even those numbers represented a sharp decline from 2003-04, when voters were still cutting her a lot of slack.

Moreover, voters have never been so pessimistic about the direction of the state and country. A staggering 75% believe "things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track" in Michigan; 71% feel the same way about the U.S. as a whole. Only 19% think Michigan remains headed "in the right direction;" 22% hold that view about the nation. These are not the kind of numbers any Governor likes to see when s/he's running for re-election.

And DeVos appears to have helped himself with his \$1 million+ TV ad buy over the past month. Granholm, meanwhile, has stumbled through a series of administrative blunders and has been largely missing in action as Oakland Co. Executive **L. Brooks Patterson** and the Republican-controlled Legislature seized the initiative from her on rescission of the state's unpopular Single Business Tax.

Here's the **IMP/MRG** question, followed by the response:

If the general election for Michigan governor were being held today, and the candidates were (ROTATE: Dick DeVos the Republican and Jennifer Granholm the Democrat), for whom would you vote? (IF UNDECIDED OR REFUSED, ASK: Which way do you lean as of today, toward DeVos or Granholm?)

39% Vote Granholm

4% Lean Granholm..... **43% Total Granholm**

35% Vote DeVos

6% Lean DeVos..... **41% Total DeVos**

16% Undecided/Refused to Answer/Don't Know

ATTORNEY GENERAL MIKE COX HOLDS UNIMPRESSIVE LEAD OVER POTENTIAL RIVAL

The race four years ago between **Mike Cox**, then a relatively unknown assistant Wayne Co. Prosecuting Attorney, and Democratic state Senator **Gary Peters** (D-Bloomfield Twp) turned out to be three times closer than **John Engler's** historic cliffhanger win over incumbent **Jim Blanchard** for Governor in 1990.

This year, it looks like Cox may be in for another buzzer-beater.

At least two other Democrats --- attorney and ex-cop **Amos Williams** of Grosse Pointe and state Rep. **Alexander "Sandy" Lipsey** of Kalamazoo --- are also candidates for the A.G. nomination. For polling purposes, **IMP** picked Bowen as a possible Cox opponent because Bowen is marginally better-known (some voters think he's the former coach of the Detroit Red Wings). **Geoffrey Fieger?** Sure, he's the best-known of all, but his negatives are so high that he can't beat anybody; besides, there's no chance he'll be the Dems' nominee. Here's how **IMP/MRG** asked the question, followed by the answers:

If the general election for Michigan Attorney General were being held today, and the candidates were (ROTATE: Mike Cox the Republican and Scott Bowen the Democrat), for whom would you vote? (IF UNDECIDED OR REFUSED, ASK: Which way do you lean as of today, toward Cox or Bowen?)

29% Vote Cox

4% Lean Cox **33% Total Cox**

22% Vote Bowen

3% Lean Bowen **25% Total Bown**

..... **42% U/RtA/DK**

LAND LEADS FOR RE-ELECTION AGAINST UNKNOWN RIVAL, BUT IT'S NO BLOWOUT

If term-limited state Rep. **Mary Waters** (D-Detroit), the only announced candidate for the Democratic nomination for Secretary of State, succeeds in winning the nod next August, she will represent the 10th straight time the Dems have nominated an African-American for this office --- the late **Richard Austin** won the first six contests against his GOP rivals, and then he and two others lost the last three.

Waters is almost totally unknown outside the city of

Detroit, and she's not a household word in Motown, either. Nevertheless, the incumbent SoS, **Terri Lynn Land**, is well under 50% in a trial match-up with her potential Democratic opponent if the election were being held today. Here is the **IMP/MRG** question, followed by the response:

If the general election for Michigan Secretary of State were being held today, and the candidates were (ROTATE: Terri Lynn Land the Republican and Mary Waters the Democrat), for whom would you vote? (IF UNDECIDED OR REFUSED, ASK: Which way do you lean as of today, toward Land or Waters?)

38% Vote Land
6% Lean Land **44% Total Land**

23% Vote Waters
4% Lean Waters **27% Total Waters**

..... **29% U/RtA/DK**

MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS INITIATIVE CONTINUES TO HOLD STRONG LEAD OVER AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DEFENDERS

An aberrant EPIC/MRA poll taken March 5-8 produced a surprising result: only 44% claimed to be in favor of the MCRI, while 47% opposed it (9% U/RtA/DK) -- the only survey in the past three years that has shown less than strong support for the **Ward Connerly**-led proposed constitutional amendment.

Using the actual wording that will appear on the Nov. 7 ballot as Proposal 06-2, the 2006 **IMP/MRG** Spring Poll produced the following question-and-response:

One proposal on the November ballot will ask voters to amend the state constitution to:

Ban public institutions from using Affirmative Action programs that give preferential treatment to groups or individuals based on their race, gender, color, ethnicity or national origin for public employment, education or contracting purposes. Public institutions affected by the proposal include state government, local governments, public colleges and universities, community colleges and school districts.

It would also prohibit public institutions from discriminating against groups or individuals due to their gender, ethnicity, race, color or national origin.

If the election were being held today, would you vote (ROTATE: YES, to adopt this proposal, or NO to reject it)? (IF DON'T KNOW/REFUSED, ASK: Would you say you are leaning toward voting yes or no?)

52% Vote Yes
3% Lean Yes **55% Total Yes**

34% Vote No
2% Lean No **36% Total No**

..... **9% U/RtA/DK**

STATE RATHER THAN 'LOCALS' SHOULD DECIDE WHETHER (AND HOW) TO MANDATE SCHOOLS' CURRICULUM

By the same relatively narrow margin that Michigan voters think K-12 schools should be banned from starting the academic year before Labor Day (see **IMP**, X, 21), the electorate also feels the question of whether the same "core" of courses should be required for all high schools in the state should be determined by the Legislature, not local boards of education.

This result isn't as overwhelming as the 59% bulge racked up by "state lawmakers" in a question posed by Public Sector Consultants last month, but that one was a "push-poll" preceded by 14 queries designed to lead respondents to a pre-ordained answer. Here is the way **IMP/MRG** worded the question, followed by the response:

Currently, the only class required by state law for graduation from high school in Michigan is one semester in civics. All other requirements are decided by individual school districts. This means that there can be great variation among school districts in what is required for graduation. Some think that this should be changed so that there is a single, statewide set of required courses for all high school students. Others say what is taught in local schools should be decided by individual local school boards.

Who do you believe should set curriculum requirements for high schools in your local area?

(ROTATE A & B)

*A. State lawmakers in Lansing
or ...
B. Your local school board?*

A. State lawmakers **53%**
B. Local school boards **42%**
..... **5% U/RtA/DK**

POLL SAYS VOTERS ARE ADAMANT: SPEAK ENGLISH!

It's been castigated as "anti-immigrant," but 83% of Michigan voters say they support a bill introduced by state Rep. **Jack Hoogendyk** (R-Kalamazoo), HB 5633, that would designate English as the official state language. Only 11% oppose the measure, while another 6% claim to be U/RtA/DK. Here is the **IMP/MRG** question, followed by the response:

A bill has been introduced in the Michigan Legislature to designate the English language as the official language of Michigan.

Do you (ROTATE: support or oppose) this legislation? (IF SUPPORT/OPPOSE, ASK: Do you strongly (support/oppose) or just somewhat (support/ oppose)?

75% Strongly support
8% Somewhat support **83% Total Support**
7% Strongly oppose

4% Somewhat oppose **11% Total Oppose**

..... **6% U/RtA/DK**

VOTERS ARE AMBIVALENT ABOUT SBT REPEAL: POLL

It's uncertain whether the electorate will ever get a chance to vote on a proposal to move up the sunset date for the state's Single Business Tax from 2009 to late 2007, and it may be just as well --- they would probably have a hard time deciding.

A more likely scenario is that, if Gov. **Jennifer Granholm** vetoes legislation to accomplish the same thing (which she has promised to do), an initiative petition drive launched by Oakland Co. Executive **L. Brooks Patterson** will be rubber-stamped by the Legislature and thereby enacted into law, bypassing Granholm, whose support would then be unnecessary.

Still, what would happen if the proposal should actually wind up on the Nov. 7 ballot? Here's how **IMP/MRG** worded a question aimed at finding out, followed by the response:

One proposal that might qualify for this year's November ballot will ask voters to repeal Michigan's Single Business Tax starting in December of next year. If voters approve this proposal, the Legislature and Governor would have one year to decide how, or whether, to replace the revenue lost because of the repeal of the tax.

If the election were being held today, would you vote ROTATE: YES, to repeal the Single Business Tax, or NO to keep it)? (IF U/RtA/DK, ASK Would you say you are leaning toward voting yes or no?)

37% Vote Yes
3% Lean Yes **40% Total Yes**

30% Vote No
3% Lean No **33% Total No**
..... **27% U/RtA/DK**

VOTERS CONCERNED ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING, BUT BELIEVE ALL THEORIES ABOUT ITS CAUSES SHOULD BE TAUGHT

Roughly four times as many Michigan citizens believe global warming is a legitimate concern as don't, but that doesn't mean the state's students should be subjected to a Kyoto-style curriculum that rams home a single theory that increased man-made gases released into the atmosphere are the principal cause.

That's the inescapable conclusion reached from perusing the responses to two questions posed by **IMP/MRG**. Here they are:

There is a scientific theory that maintains that increased carbon dioxide and other gases released into the atmosphere will, if unchecked, lead to global warming and an increase in average temperatures.

Do you think that ~~the~~ possibility of global warming should be treated as a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, just a minor problem, or no problem at all?)

50% Very serious problem
28% Somewhat serious problem
10% Just a minor problem
11% No problem at all
1% U/RtA/DK

Some say that scientific evidence backing the theory of global warming is so strong that only this theory should be taught in schools, with no opposing points of view.

Others say that the theory of global warming is still unproven, and students should be presented with all scientific theories, including those that disagree with the theory of global warming.

What do you think? Should only the theory of global warming be taught in schools, or should schools teach all scientific theories regarding global climates and climate change?

8% Teach only global warming
87% Teach all theories
2% Neither
3% U/RtA/DK

TEACH DARWIN, SURE, BUT TEACH OTHER THEORIES, TOO: POLL

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution? Intelligent Design? Creationism? Anything else out there? Whatever, teach 'em all, say Michigan voters, who by a robust 4-1 margin claim they would prefer to see Darwin's theory as well as the theories opposed to it all taught, not just Darwin's theory alone. Here's the way **IMP/MRG** asked the question, followed by the response:

As you may know, there are several points of view regarding the beginnings and complexities of human life. How this topic should be taught in schools has been the subject of debate. Which of the following two statements comes closest to your own opinion? (ROTATE A & B)

A. Biology teachers should teach only Darwin's theory of evolution and the scientific evidence that supports it.

B. Biology teachers should teach Darwin's theory of evolution, but also the scientific evidence against it.

Which one of those comes closest to your own belief?

A. Darwin's theory only 17%
B. Darwin's theory plus evidence against it.. 76%
..... **7% U/RtA/DK**