Poll Results Show Voters Don't Support Education Funding Proposal, Says Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate

PRNewswire
LANSING, Mich.

The Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate, a growing alliance of over 25 taxpayer, local government, law enforcement, and healthcare organizations, today unveiled poll results that indicate a majority of Michigan voters would oppose a proposal that would provide automatic, guaranteed annual increases in education funding.

"We agree with Michigan voters that adequate funding for education is important," said Tim McGuire, Executive Director of the Michigan Association of Counties. "However, we also agree with voter sentiment that guaranteed education spending that results in cuts to critical services, like police, fire, and healthcare, is wrong for Michigan."

The Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate released poll results that gauge voter support for a statutory initiative to provide automatic, guaranteed annual increases in education spending. Proponents of the plan have gathered enough signatures to likely place the proposal on the November 2006 ballot. The poll was conducted by Lansing-based Marketing Resource Group and has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.1 percent with a 95 percent degree of confidence.

"Voters clearly understand the importance of proper education funding," said Tom Shields, President of Marketing Resource Group. "The proposal would pass with a slim majority of 56 percent if the election were held today. However, once voters learn the consequences of this funding mandate, their support decreases significantly."

"More telling," added Shields, "is that once voters are informed that the plan would come at the expense of police, fire, healthcare and their wallet ... support plummets (only 39% support)."

The non-partisan House Fiscal Agency has estimated that the K-16 education funding proposal would cost state government approximately $1.1 billion more per year over current education spending. Nowhere in the lengthy wording of the petition is any reference to education quality, student achievement, test scores, or graduation rates.

"In contrast to other recent polling that claims 'voters support tax increases for education,' the results of the MRG survey indicate that taxpayers expect accountability for the money they spend on education," remarked Shields. "Since there is no accountability in the K-16 spending mandate proposal, a majority of polled voters say they would oppose the plan."

"Michigan citizens have demonstrated time and again their willingness to support adequate funding for education, but there is a limit to what they can and should be asked to pay," said Bill Martin, CEO of the Michigan Association of REALTORS®. "It is clear that most voters are unwilling to pay more in taxes for this unaffordable $1.1 billion spending mandate."

"Michigan citizens deserve a balanced approach to funding all needs," concluded McGuire. "Local governments have been faced with significant budget cuts that have already jeopardized the critical services that Michigan citizens rely on."

The Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate today unveiled a Web site to educate and inform the public about why the K-16 spending mandate is wrong for Michigan. That website is located at http://www.stopthespendingmandate.com/ .

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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Web site: http://www.stopthespendingmandate.com/

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