Michigan Chamber Survey Shows Sixty-Eight Percent of Voters Want State Government to Get a Grip on Spending

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Sixty-eight percent of voters want state government to get a grip on spending, according to the results of a statewide public opinion survey released earlier today by the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. The statewide survey of voter sentiment on taxes, spending and how to balance the state budget was conducted for the Michigan Chamber by Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc., East Lansing, during the same time period Governor Granholm held a series of budget forums around the state.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20000320/DEM039)

"Across the state, working families have drawn down savings and job providers have cut expenses to deal with the current economic slowdown. When 68 percent of everyday voters say the state should cut spending to balance the state budget, the message is clear: It's time for lawmakers and the Governor to get a grip on the state budget deficit by cutting spending," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Jim Barrett.

"With only 17 percent of respondents indicating they think state government should raise taxes to balance the budget, it is also clear that there is not significant support in Michigan for raising taxes," Barrett added.

The Michigan Chamber survey also asked voters the question: "Do you think the overall level of taxes paid by individuals and business is too high, too low, or just about right?" In response to this question, 32 percent said too high, 49 percent said about right, and 10 percent said too low.

"Again, the message to elected officials in Lansing is clear: People understand the problem is not that taxes are too low, but that state spending is too high. Policymakers must now take bold and dramatic steps to restructure state and local government to bring state spending back into line with taxpayer ability to pay," Barrett concluded.

The Chamber survey also asked voters if they would be more or less likely to vote for a state legislator if they knew that he or she voted to raise taxes to balance the state budget. More than half -- 57 percent -- of respondents said they would be less likely to vote for a legislator who raised taxes to balance the state budget.

Mitchell Research used the following methodology to conduct the survey. A sample of 600 likely voters was drawn in the State of Michigan and stratified by city and township within county, based upon average voter turnout in statewide general elections. Given the sample size of 600 and the method of random selection, the statistical margin of error can be reliably set at 4.0 percent within a 95 percent degree of confidence. The survey, conducted from November 3 through November 11, 2003, consisted of 600 15-minute telephone interviews. The questions and aggregate results are attached to this news release.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization that represents approximately 6,300 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc., Statewide Public Opinion Survey
For The Michigan Chamber Of Commerce
November 3-11, 2003

Questions & Aggregate Results

A. As you know, for a variety of reasons, the state is faced with budget deficits. Do you think the state should (ROTATE: cut spending or raise taxes) to balance the state budget?

Cut spending	68%
Raise Taxes	17%
Neither (volunteered)	4%
Don't know (volunteered)	12%
Refused (volunteered)	<1%

B. Thinking about state, local and public school taxes in Michigan, do you think the overall level of taxes paid by individuals and business is too high, too low, or just about right?

Too High	32%
Too Low	10%
About Right	49%
Don't know (volunteered)	8%
Refused (volunteered)	<1%

C. Would you be more or less likely to vote for a legislator if you knew that he or she voted to raise taxes to balance the state budget? (IF MORE OR LESS LIKELY, ASK: Would that be much (more/less) likely or just somewhat (more/less) likely?

Much more likely	5%
Little more likely	15%
Little less likely	24%
Much less likely	33%
Don't know	20%
Refused	3%
TOTAL MORE LIKELY	20%
TOTAL LESS LIKELY	57%

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