EPIC-MRA PRESS RELEASE ON CHANGING TO A GRADUATED INCOME TAX
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Key finding:

A 66-25 percent majority would vote for a graduated income tax

In the EPIC-MRA August April statewide survey of 600 active general election voters, a 66 percent majority said they would vote for a graduated income tax proposal that cuts taxes for 95 percent of Michiganders if it were placed on a future election ballot. The question was commissioned by State Representative Jim Townsend to test voter opinion on his proposal for a graduated income tax.

Survey respondents were asked the following question:

There may be a petition drive to place a graduated state income tax proposal on a future election ballot. If it were approved by voters, it would cut state taxes for 95 percent of Michigan residents. The current flat rate state income tax of 4.25 percent would be replaced with a graduated income tax where Michigan residents with the highest incomes would pay the highest tax rates, middle income residents with household incomes below $160,000 would pay significantly less, and residents with the lowest incomes would pay much less than they pay now. The proposal would also provide significant additional state revenue to support such priorities as public safety, public education and infrastructure. If this proposal appeared on a future election ballot and the election were held today, would you vote YES to adopt a graduated income tax, or would you vote NO to reject it?

[IF UNDECIDED, ASK: “Well, if the election were held today and you had to decide right now, would you lean toward voting YES or NO?” AND CODE BEST RESPONSE]

The responses were:

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<tr>
<td>Vote</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lean</td>
<td>toward Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL VOTE YES</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL VOTE NO</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean</td>
<td>toward No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided/Refused</td>
<td>9%</td>
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Democrats would support the proposal by an 82 to 13 percent overwhelming majority, Independent voters would vote “yes” by a 63 to 17 percent majority, and even Republican voters would support it by a 52 to 41 percent narrow majority. Support among Republican voters would support it by a 52 to 41 percent narrow majority. Support among Republican voters would support it by a 52 to 41 percent narrow majority. Support among Republican voters would support it by a 52 to 41 percent narrow majority. Support among Republican voters would support it by a 52 to 41 percent narrow majority.
women was considerably strong -- 63 to 27 percent, while Republican men oppose it by a 55 to 40 percent majority. Said Bernie Porn, President of EPIC-MRA, if this proposal were placed on the ballot in 2016 by a petition drive, “it could be almost as strong as a motivational influence for Democrats to vote as a minimum wage increase when we tested that proposal, which Republicans chose to support legislatively in a significant increase rather than have to contend with it as a ballot proposal.”

Every region of the state would vote “yes” by a minimum of 61 percent in western Michigan to 82 percent in Northern Michigan. Wayne County would vote “yes” by 66 percent, Oakland County by 63 percent and Macomb County by 62 percent.

Presidential election voters would vote “yes” by 76 percent, while voters who participate in all elections would vote “yes” by 65 percent. Voters who have a favorable opinion of Governor Snyder or give him a positive job rating would vote “yes” by 60 percent, and even Tea Party supporters would vote “yes” by a 49 to 41 percent strongly plurality.

Union members would vote “yes” by a 72 percent majority, with non-union households supportive by 65 percent. Essentially, every demographic group offered strong support for a graduated income tax plan that would allow 95 percent of Michigan households to pay less than they pay now.

Prepared statements from State Representatives Jim Townsend (D-Royal Oak), Robert Wittenberg (D-Oak Park), and Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor):

“I understand the frustration expressed by many residents last Tuesday,” said State Rep. Robert Wittenberg. “Proposal 1 was a clear repudiation from voters all across the political spectrum. Middle-class Michiganders are fed up because their wages have declined and they know it’s not right that they were asked to pay to fix the roads, especially when the wealthiest aren’t paying their fair share.”

“Michiganders are frustrated that Gov. Snyder and the Republican-controlled Legislature continue to take more from the pockets of low- and middle-income families to pay for massive tax breaks for wealthier residents,” said State Rep. Jeff Irwin. “Michigan now relies more than almost every other state on our poorest citizens to pay for our schools and roads.”

“Everywhere I’ve gone residents support our plan for Tax Equality, which would cut taxes for 95 percent of Michiganders and increase revenue by $560 to $760 million per year by asking the top 1% to pay their fair share,” said Jim Townsend, Democratic Vice Chair of the House Committee on Tax Policy. “Michiganders are ready for Tax Equality. They’re ready to ask the top 1% to pay their fair share and disrupt that group’s special deal.”