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## For Governor - DeVos by a Mile and Ficano by a Meter

### *MIRS/Rossman Group/Denno-Noor Poll Shows DeVos and Ficano with Early Leads*

**LANSING, Mich.** — According to polling data released today, former GOP Gubernatorial candidate Dick DeVos remains the consensus choice among Republican voters, while Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano has a slim lead over Lieutenant Governor John Cherry in the Democratic field.

“The 2006 election may be only a few months behind us, but positioning in the race for Governor has already begun,” said Kelly Rossman McKinney, CEO of The Rossman Group. “Today, Dick DeVos would again be the GOP nominee for Governor, while nearly 50 percent of Democrats are undecided as to who their next nominee for Governor should be.”

This according to a recent state-wide survey conducted by Denno-Noor Research, in partnership with The Rossman Group, one of Michigan’s top public relations and issue management consulting firms, and Michigan Information & Research Services, Michigan’s leading daily legislative and state government newsletter. MIRS was recently voted the preferred newsletter of Lansing’s political insiders.

DeVos holds a strong lead over all other candidates in virtually every demographic segment — scoring particularly well among 18 – 35 year-old GOP voters (56 percent) and self-identified strong Republicans (51 percent). Geographically, he performed particularly well in the U.P., with 100 percent support, and in the Upper Lower Peninsula, where he received 64 percent of the GOP vote. DeVos’ numbers are weakest in voter-rich Oakland County, where he received only 29 percent.

Trailing DeVos (in order of support) were Attorney General Michael Cox (10 percent), Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson (9 percent), Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land (4 percent), mid-Michigan Congressman Mike Rogers (4 percent) and former Secretary of State and current Macomb County Congresswoman Candice Miller (3 percent). Twenty three percent of Republicans surveyed indicated they are undecided.

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“Although very early, these numbers give us a good sense for where the rank and file GOP voters are right now with respect to their choice for Governor,” said MIRS President John T. Reurink. “These numbers are particularly surprising, given that Michael Cox, Terri Lynn Land and Candice Miller have all won state-wide general election contests with comfortable margins, while DeVos was trounced by Governor Granholm just a few months ago. Clearly, the true believers in the GOP still believe in Dick DeVos.”

DeVos’ numbers decrease among older demographics — he drops to 50 percent among 36 — 49 year-olds, to 44 percent among 50 — 64 year-olds, and to 33 percent among those 65 years-old and older.

“Clearly, if Dick DeVos were to run again — and no one is doubting that he has the financial resources to duplicate his eye-popping 2006 spending — he would start the campaign with a substantial lead over any other Republican in the race,” said Kelly Rossman-McKinney, CEO of The Rossman Group. “He even leads those GOP Members of Congress who were tested — *in their own districts*. Clearly, the Republican faithful are not blaming DeVos for his overwhelming loss to Granholm last November.”

On the Democratic side, the picture is not nearly as clear. Each of the candidates tested well in their home base, but with 48 percent of the Democratic primary vote undecided, it’s a contest, unlike the GOP, that has no dominant candidate and remains wide open.

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano’s slim lead is due to his relatively strong showing in his base, collecting 42 percent of the Democratic vote in suburban Wayne County, 39 percent in the city of Detroit and 26 percent in Macomb County.

“Trailing Ficano by a single point was Lieutenant Governor John Cherry with 13 percent, collecting most of his vote from his tri-City base (32 percent),” said Denno-Noor president Dennis Denno. “The current problem for Cherry is that his role as back-up for Governor Granholm, and being twice elected on a state-wide ballot as her running mate, has failed to provide him any support outside of his original state Senate base. Ultimately, he will be graded on her performance over the final four years of her term, without the benefit of her charisma — which was very appealing to Michigan voters in the last two Gubernatorial elections. The Lieutenant Governor, to have any chance of winning, needs some of that charisma to rub off, and to deflect any of the baggage the administration carries forward if Michigan’s economy continues to lag.”

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The rest of the Democratic field was in single digits, with Upper Peninsula Congressman Bart Stupak next at 9 percent (even though he scored 90 percent in the U.P.), Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick at 5 percent, former Wayne County Prosecutor and current Detroit Medical Center Executive Michael Duggan at 4 percent and Speaker of the House Andy Dillon at 3 percent.

“Although we’re way out from Election Day, for the Democrats it’s currently a wide open field,” added Rossman-McKinney. “Any of these candidates, or a candidate that is yet to emerge, could take the primary. Meanwhile, the Republicans appear to be very solidly behind DeVos. This is excellent news for Dick, and if these numbers hold, they will certainly be helpful to deter other Republican candidates from ultimately entering the race.”

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**Methodology:**

**This survey was part of the inaugural Rossman Group/MIRS/Denno-Noor Quarterly Survey of the Michigan electorate. 600 respondents were surveyed between February 21 and February 23, and the participation was stratified based on census data and past voter behavior. A screen was employed to include only those participants who said they intended on voting, either at the polls or by absentee ballot, in the November 2008 Election. The margin of error is plus/minus 4 percent.**