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## After Jobs & Economy – Health Care Top Priority

*MIRS/Rossman Group/Denno-Noor Poll Shows Voters Want Legislature to Tackle Health Care, Education*

**LANSING, Mich.** — According to polling data released today, when jobs and the economy are taken out of the mix, voters cite health care and education as the most important issues facing Michigan.

“It’s hardly a state secret that the economy is job one in Michigan,” said Kelly Rossman McKinney, CEO of The Rossman Group. “But once you get past that, people still care about each other – we want to make sure they are healthy and educated.”

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.

The question was worded as follows:

“Most people cite jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing Michigan. Aside from the economy and jobs, what is the NEXT most important issue facing Michigan’s lawmakers this year? Would it be (**ROTATE**) health care, education – which includes K-12 and higher education, transportation and roads, the environment, taxes, homeland security or tourism?”

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Responses were as follows:

Health Care	30%
Education	28%
Taxes	16%
Homeland Security	5%
The Environment	5%
Transportation and Roads	4%
Tourism	2%
Access to Higher Education	2%
None of the Above	6%
Unsure	2%

“Looking at specific demographics,” said Denno-Noor President Dennis Denno, “the younger the voter, the more likely they were to cite education as the most important issue facing Michigan, and the least likely to be concerned with health care (16 percent). Taxes showed up third overall in the poll, gaining the most attention from Oakland County voters (25 percent), Macomb County voters (26 percent), and self-identified strong Republicans (33%).”

The following chart demonstrates where responses landed on this issue geographically\*:

	<u>SE MI</u>	<u>Central MI</u>	<u>West MI</u>	<u>Tri-Cities/Thumb</u>	<u>Upper L.P.</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>Oakland</u>	<u>Macomb</u>	<u>Detroit</u>	<u>Balance of Wayne</u>
<b>Health Care</b>	33%	32%	26%	36%	21%	22%	32%	30%	27%	34%
<b>Education</b>	31%	30%	31%	30%	33%	33%	17%	28%	27%	22%
<b>Transportation/Roads</b>	2%	4%	5%	5%	0%	6%	6%	2%	0%	3%
<b>Environment</b>	7%	4%	6%	6%	3%	0%	5%	2%	2%	5%
<b>Access to Higher Ed</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	0%	1%	2%	2%	0%
<b>Taxes</b>	12%	18%	13%	9%	15%	6%	25%	26%	15%	18%
<b>Homeland Security</b>	0%	2%	5%	5%	9%	6%	6%	8%	7%	6%
<b>Tourism</b>	2%	0%	3%	2%	3%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>None of the Above</b>	10%	9%	6%	5%	3%	11%	4%	2%	12%	6%
<b>Unsure</b>	2%	2%	4%	2%	9%	6%	4%	0%	7%	6%

\*All numbers rounded. Thus, totals may exceed 100 percent.

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Added MIRS President John T. Reurink, “It is important to remember that we asked people about issues facing the state, not issues facing voters personally. Thus, these numbers have more to do with media coverage of issues the legislature is tackling — as well as those issues covered by the national press corps — than they do with issues that are important to each individual based on their life situation and needs.”

While both men and women overall were in agreement that education was the top priority, there was much less agreement on a partisan level. In fact, neither Democrats nor Republicans placed education at the top of their list. After jobs and the economy, self-identified strong Democrats rated health care as the number one issue (43 percent) and self-identified strong Republicans rated taxes as their top concern (33 percent).”

“However, perception is reality,” added Kelly Rossman-McKinney. “Health care and education are the areas where voters see Michigan’s greatest challenges today. This should be a wake-up call to those who are seeking to raise awareness for the importance of other issues – this is your competition.”

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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.**