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Contact: Kelly Rossman-McKinney  
517-487-9320  
Dennis Denno  
517-402-2453  
John T. Reurink  
517-482-2125

## Clinton, Giuliani With Early Edge in Michigan

*MIRS/Rossman Group/Denno-Noor Poll Shows Each With Double-Digit Leads*

**LANSING, Mich.** — According to polling data released today, both New York U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani are enjoying comfortable early leads in Michigan — but there is plenty of room for contenders to make a run.

“No matter how you slice it, Michigan voters — whether they are hard-core Democrats or hard-core Republicans — are leaning toward the Big Apple candidates,” said Kelly Rossman McKinney, CEO of The Rossman Group.

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.

Hillary Clinton was the choice of 32 percent of those Democrats surveyed, finishing double digits higher than her nearest competitor, former Vice Presidential candidate John Edwards (21 percent), and 12 points higher than Illinois U.S. Senator Barack Obama (20 percent). The remaining Democrat candidates were all in single digits — former Vice President Al Gore at 6 percent, Delaware U.S. Senator Joseph Biden at 2 percent, Connecticut U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd at 1 percent and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson at 1 percent.

Geographically, Clinton scored highest in Wayne County with support from 48% of Democrats surveyed, and lowest in Oakland County at 15%. Clinton even leads among African-American voters — a demographic in which her husband, former President Bill Clinton, always performed well — with an 11-point margin over Obama (43 percent to 32 percent). Clinton also enjoyed a comfortable lead among those 65 and older, while she performed the weakest among those between the ages of 36 and 49. Surprisingly, she only scored 33 percent among women.

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“Speaking of President Clinton, we know that politics can make for strange bedfellows, as evidenced by the fact that Obama scored the highest in the Upper Peninsula (40 percent) and the city of Detroit (29 percent),” said The Rossman Group CEO Kelly Rossman-McKinney. “Although these early numbers indicate this is a race that may be Clinton’s to lose, with 17 percent undecided and candidates dropping in and out of the race, Michigan remains wide open for the Democrat Presidential field.”

Edwards ran strongest in Macomb County (35 percent) and in the northern region of the Lower Peninsula (33%).

“Among self-identified strong Democrats, the segment of the electorate most likely to participate in a primary or caucus, Clinton’s lead grows,” said Denno-Noor President Dennis Denno. “Her share of the hard Democrat vote is at 35 percent, while her closest contenders drop (Obama at 20 percent and Edwards at 16 percent). I would say the candidate to watch in this race is ‘Undecided.’ How that 17 percent breaks could very well decide the outcome of the election in Michigan. But clearly — for now — Clinton, Obama and Edwards are out front and unchallenged by the rest of the field. We tested former Vice President Al Gore even though he is not an announced candidate and, quite frankly, I was surprised at how poorly he showed.”

On the Republican side of the aisle, a three-way race is also shaping up, with former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani enjoying an early eleven point lead over former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, the son of former Michigan Governor George Romney (17 percent), and a twelve point lead over Arizona U.S. Senator John McCain (16 percent). Trailing further behind these candidates were former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich at 10 percent, Vice President Dick Cheney at 6 percent, Kansas U.S. Senator Sam Brownback at 3 percent and Nebraska U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel at 2 percent. As with the Democrat primary voters, 17% of Republicans were undecided.

Geographically, Giuliani performed best in Central Michigan (40 percent) and in Southeast Michigan (37.5 percent).

“Interestingly, Giuliani performs best among those demographics that are the least likely to vote in a GOP Primary – younger voters (18 – 35 year olds support him at 37 percent) and voters who are not self-identified strong Republicans (32.5 percent),” added MIRS President John T. Reurink. “These are demographics that McCain dominated on his way to winning the Michigan Primary in the 2000 contest and will clearly be a battlefield in 2008. Giuliani is certainly enjoying an early advantage resulting from his leadership during the 9/11 Crisis. But will his supporters actually vote?”

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Meanwhile, Romney performs best among older voters (22 percent of those over the age of 65), and in Wayne County (23%). McCain's strongest support comes from southeast Michigan (25 percent).

"Among self-identified Strong Republicans, those who are most likely to vote in a GOP Primary, Giuliani's lead drops slightly with 26 percent, followed by McCain at 16% and Romney at 13%," added Reurink. "Gingrich, although not currently an announced candidate, actually shows up in third among these strongest GOP voters with 14.5 percent — ahead of Romney who moves to fourth place."

"Traditionally, Michigan has been critical to both parties in terms of selecting their nominees for President," added Rossman-McKinney. "Much will change between now and Election Day. But for now, it looks like Michigan Democrats and Republicans each have three front-runners. Eventually, all roads to the White House run through Michigan — but candidates better be careful, our roads have plenty of potholes."

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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.**