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## Business Background Beats Political Know-How

*Poll Shows Michigan Voters Favor Business Experience in Elected Officials*

**LANSING, Mich.** — Think political officials should have an extensive background in politics? Not Michigan voters. When asked in a recent survey which background was more important in an elected official, more than half chose business experience over political experience.

“Considering Michigan’s economic woes and the state’s budget mess last year, it’s not surprising that voters want a candidate with a little more real-world experience,” said Kelly Rossman-McKinney, CEO of The Rossman Group. “If these preferences continue it will be interesting to see if Michigan voters find more business leaders on the ballot in upcoming elections.”

The survey was conducted by Denno-Noor Research in partnership with The Rossman Group, recently named Lansing’s Most Effective Public Relations Firm by a survey of political insiders, and Michigan Information & Research Services (MIRS), Michigan’s leading daily legislative and state government newsletter.

The survey asked: “*Which is more important in an elected official – business experience or political experience?*”

Results show that 52 percent of Michigan voters said business experience was more important, compared to 33 percent who preferred political experience.

“While voters across the state indicated an overall preference for business backgrounds in their elected leaders, the poll shows that young voters have almost the exact opposite preferences,” said Denno-Noor President Dennis Denno. “Those numbers are significant in a year when young voter turnout is expected to top record highs.”

Fifty-six percent of 18-to-35-year-old voters found political experience to be more important compared to 36 percent who favored business experience.

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“Business experience trumped political experience across the political spectrum, but the results did reflect some interesting party preferences,” said MIRS President John Reurink. “Democrats favored business experience, but only by about 6 percentage points – a pretty small margin.”

“Republicans, on the other hand, were less divided: 60 percent valued business experience most in their leaders – 31 percentage points more than those who favored political experience.”

**Methodology:**

**This survey was part of the Rossman Group/MIRS/Denno-Noor Quarterly Survey of the Michigan electorate. 600 respondents were surveyed between May 17 and May 21, 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 four percent.**

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