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May 31, 2007

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Voters: Granholm Election "Mandate" Gone

Granholm's Honeymoon Over, Voters Want Results or a Different Mate

LANSING, Mich. — Living in Michigan, we're used to wild fluctuations in the weather, yet the attitudes of Michigan voters aren't normally as fickle – but in the case of who should be Governor, voters have flip-flopped in their support for Jennifer Granholm.

"If the election between Governor Granholm and Dick DeVos were held now, DeVos would be ahead," said Kelly Rossman-McKinney, CEO of The Rossman Group. "Clearly, this major shift is a reflection of voter dissatisfaction with the economy and the failure of Lansing to solve the state's budget mess."

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:

"A lot has happened since the November 2006 Michigan gubernatorial election. If Michigan's 2006 gubernatorial election was re-held right now and the same candidates, (ROTATE) Dick DeVos the Republican and Jennifer Granholm the Democrat were on the ballot, who do you think you would vote for? "

In 2006, Granholt trounced DeVos by 14 points – 56 percent to 42 percent. But according to the results of this survey, if the election were held again, Grand Rapids businessman Dick DeVos would now hold a three-point lead. Voters favored DeVos with 41 percent of the vote compared to 38 percent for Governor Granholt, with 15 percent refusing to choose either of the two, and 5 percent opting for “other.”

“In our February survey, we saw some erosion in Governor Granholt’s support, when only 43 percent of the electorate admitted to voting for her, compared to 32 percent who said that they’d voted for DeVos,” said MIRS President John T. Reurink. “But this is a major statement that the public is holding Governor Granholt accountable for a lack of leadership in confronting the state’s problems.”

The following chart demonstrates where responses landed on the ballot test between Granholt and Devos*:

	<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>
Governor Granholt	28%	32%	40%	32%	34%	47%	36%	42%	72%	33%
Dick DeVos	56%	47%	42%	38%	50%	32%	47%	36%	10%	41%
Refused	12%	16%	16%	24%	9%	21%	9%	14%	10%	21%
Other	4%	5%	3%	6%	6%	0%	8%	8%	8%	5%

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

“Virtually every demographic segment of the electorate shifted significantly towards DeVos,” said Denno-Noor President Dennis Denno. “DeVos leads among 18 – 35 year-olds by thirteen points (54 percent to 31 percent), the only age group to give DeVos more than 50 percent of the vote. DeVos holds a slim lead among males (41 percent to 39 percent), but most important, female voters who were the backbone of Granholt’s landslide 2006 victory would now favor DeVos by four points (42 percent to 38 percent).”

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“These numbers should be disturbing to the Granholm administration on a number of levels,” said Rossman-McKinney. “The 2006 election results, which were interpreted by many to be a mandate, have flip-flopped. That mandate is gone, and so is the honeymoon between Governor Granholm and the voters of Michigan. While voters are not necessarily ready for a divorce so soon into this term, they are certainly ready for counseling – because they believe their needs aren’t being met in this relationship. While bad news for the Governor, this is also very encouraging news for the DeVos camp, should he be contemplating a run in 2010.

“This also has a serious impact on the Governor’s ability to push legislation with the confidence that she has the backing of Michigan voters,” added Rossman-McKinney. “Not only is Governor Granholm’s legacy in jeopardy, but with a lack of political capital, her ability to advance legislation important to her and her administration could be diminished.”

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Methodology:

This survey was part of the Rossman Group/MIRS/Denno-Noor Quarterly Survey of the Michigan electorate. 600 respondents were surveyed between May 14 and May 17, 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.