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Michigan Voters Oppose Speaker Dillon's Mandatory State Government-Run Health Plan

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan voters by a wide margin of 57 percent to 37 percent oppose the mandatory state government-run health insurance plan proposed by House Speaker Andy Dillon, according to a recent statewide survey conducted by Marketing Resource Group (MRG).

The survey of 600 likely voters was conducted Sept. 12-20 on behalf of Citizens for Accountability in Reform, a growing coalition representing taxpayers, police, firefighters, teachers, insurance companies and others who are concerned that this proposal doesn't provide the reform it promises at a price taxpayers can afford. The survey has an error margin of ± 4.1 percent.

Especially strong is the intensity of Michigan voters' opposition to the mandatory state government-run health plan, which has been introduced in the state Legislature as House Bill 5345. Of voters who are opposed, 43 percent said they were "strongly" opposed after hearing arguments both for and against the legislation (only 19 percent "strongly" favor the measure). Some 72 percent of voters who identified themselves as Republicans and 60 percent of self-described Independents are opposed.

Voters are deeply alarmed by the financial costs and risks of the proposal to Michigan taxpayers. The survey found voters doubt claims by proposal backers that it would save the state \$900 million. In fact, instead of saving the state money, 65 percent of Michigan voters believe the mandatory state government-run health insurance plan would cost taxpayers even more.

"Michigan voters believe it's a bad idea and risky for taxpayers to force all local governments, universities, colleges, local schools, and local police officers and firefighters to buy their health insurance from a state government-run health plan that adds \$4 billion or more in liabilities to the state budget," said Paul King, Director of Research Services at MRG. "It also appears Michigan voters understand that creating this massive new insurance plan means they — the taxpayers — would also be responsible for the plan's liabilities. That's a very bitter pill for them to swallow."

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In fact, taxpayer bailouts have occurred in other states with mandatory and voluntary public employer health insurance plans. This year in North Carolina — one of the few states with a mandatory health insurance plan for public employers — the Legislature turned to taxpayers to bail out the plan's deficit to the tune of more than \$250 million this year and \$658 million over three years.

Michigan voters also strongly object to the legislation's mandate to force all local governments, school districts, universities, colleges, police and fire fighters, and state government agencies to buy health insurance for their employees from a state-government plan that would be controlled by a board of political appointees named by the Governor and Legislature.

"The mandatory nature of the proposal is poison with Michigan voters," King said. "Four out of five — including voters who originally said they'd support the Speaker's proposal — would want it to be voluntary if it should ever become law in Michigan. They believe it's best to allow local government and school district officials to compare public and private plans and choose the right one for them"

Citizens for Accountability in Reform will continue to educate citizens about the risks to taxpayers of the mandatory state government-run health insurance plan being proposed by the Speaker.

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