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Contact:

Tom Shields, President, 517.372.4400, ext. 230 (O); 517.449.9810 (M); toms@mrgmi.com

Bill Ballenger, 517.487.6665 (O); 517.410.8987 (M); impbb@comcast.net

Paul King, Director of Research Services, 313.881.3724; paulk@mrgmi.com

Dave Doyle, Vice President, 517.372.4400, ext. 226 (O); 517.449.9812 (M); daved@mrgmi.com

Stabenow Holds Slim Lead Over Unknown Hekman: Zahra Beats Granholm in Supreme Match-up *Gender Gap Still Alive and Big Differences In Union Vs. Non-union Homes*

Lansing—Virtually unknown candidates for the U.S. Senate and the State Supreme Court perform very well against long-time Democratic politicians. Incumbent U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow holds a slim 11-point edge over announced Republican Senate candidate Randy Hekman. And incumbent Supreme Court Justice Brian Zahra holds a slim, but remarkable, 5-point edge over former Governor Jennifer Granholm in a hypothetical match-up for Michigan's Supreme Court.

“Debbie Stabenow is now into her fourth decade of elected office and she is seeking her third term in the U.S. Senate, yet she is below 50 percent against an unknown Randy Hekman of Grand Rapids. Stabenow is a prolific fundraiser and tireless candidate but she cannot be happy with the lack of support she has today. Any time an incumbent politician is below 50 percent in a head-to-head match-up, it means she is vulnerable,” said *Inside Michigan Politics* editor Bill Ballenger.

“Voters are not clamoring for the political return of Governor Granholm at this time. It appears that Granholm will have a difficult time following in the footsteps of former Democratic Governors Swainson and Williams who both served on the state's high court after they left office. Supreme Court Justice Brian Zahra defeats Granholm 38 percent to 33 percent. For a virtually unknown, newly appointed Supreme Court justice out of Wayne County this indicates that Granholm may have finally lost her luster with the Michigan voters,” said Marketing Resource Group president Tom Shields.

The key demographic differences are among union versus non-union households and between men and women. Both Stabenow and Granholm win their respective match-ups

among women and trail their relatively unknown opponents among male voters. As expected, Stabenow and Granholm win union households but trail in the 61 percent of homes with no union affiliation.

The actual wording of the questions and the results are below.

If the general election for U.S. Senator from Michigan were being held today, and the candidates were (**ROTATE:** Randy Hekman (HECK-men) the Republican and Debbie Stabenow (STAB-eh-now) the Democrat), for whom would you vote? (**IF UNDECIDED OR REFUSED, ASK:** Which way do you lean as of today, toward Hekman or Stabenow?)

	All....	Male	Female	Union	Non-Union
Vote Hekman	29%	36	23	22	33
Lean Hekman	4%	4	4	3	5
Vote Stabenow	41%	33	48	49	36
Lean Stabenow	4%	3	4	5	3
Don't know / Undecided	20%	22	18	20	20
Refused	2%	2	3	2	2
TOTAL HEKMAN	34%	40%	28%	25%	38%
TOTAL STABENOW	45%	36%	52%	54%	39%

And if the election for Michigan Supreme Court Justice were being held today, and the candidates were (**ROTATE:** Incumbent Justice Brian Zahra (ZAR-ah) and Jennifer Granholm), for whom would you vote? (**IF UNDECIDED OR REFUSED, ASK:** Which way do you lean as of today, toward (**ROTATE:** Zahra, or Granholm?))

	All....	Male	Female	Union	Non-Union
Vote Zahra	33%	41	26	28	36
Lean Zahra	5%	4	5	6	5
Vote Granholm	30%	26	34	34	28
Lean Granholm	3%	3	3	3	3
Don't know / Undecided	28%	25	30	28	27
Refused	1%	1	2	*	2
TOTAL ZAHRA	38%	45%	31%	34%	40%
TOTAL GRANHOLM	33%	30%	37%	37%	31%

The survey sampled 600 likely voters stratified by city and/or township, based on past voting history. The statistical margin of error is +/- 4.1%. The survey was conducted March 14-19. 88

percent of the survey sample was conducted with live callers and 12 percent of the sample was conducted online with individuals who only have cell phones. Voters identified themselves as 26 percent Republicans, 26 percent Democrats and 43 percent Independents.

** indicates less than 1%*

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Lansing, Michigan-based Marketing Resource Group, Inc. (www.mrgmi.com) is an award-winning PR firm representing corporate, association, nonprofit, and private clients with interests in Michigan. MRG offers expertise in public affairs, communications, political campaign management, and public opinion survey research. For more than thirty years, MRG has conducted its bi-annual omnibus Michigan Poll™, tracking the pulse of Michigan voters on key statewide public policy and political issues. MRG is the only Michigan public opinion survey research firm that maintains nearly 30 years of trend analyses of voter attitudes related to state and national leaders, political parties, and the political and economic climate in Michigan. MRG has earned six Public Relations Society of America Silver Anvil awards, the PR profession's highest honor.

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