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Snyder up in latest SOSS  
Obama steady, Congress last

Gov. Rick Snyder’s approval ratings improved in the latest results from Michigan State University’s State of the State Survey.

President Obama’s positive ratings showed little change in the survey of 1,008 Michigan adults from Dec. 19, 2013 to Feb. 20 this year.

Congress, however, continued to fare poorly.

Snyder’s “good” or “excellent” performance ratings climbed to 39.2 percent this winter, compared with 29.2 percent during spring 2013 and 35.6 percent in fall 2013.

“It’s interesting to note that his approval ratings are similar to those of former Gov. Jennifer Granholm during her successful re-election in 2006,” Ballard said. “Of course, his re-election is not assured by any means. But the results from 2006 indicate that it is possible for a Michigan governor to win re-election, even with relatively modest approval ratings.”

Snyder formally filed for re-election Thursday. A Republican, he is expected to face former Democratic U.S. Rep. Mark Schauer. Michigan candidates for elected office have until Tuesday, April 22 to file their intentions with the Secretary of State.

Snyder started his administration in 2011 with SOSS approval ratings at 44.5 percent. In most of the surveys since then, Snyder’s favorable ratings have been in the low- to mid-30 percent range, Ballard said.

Snyder’s approval rating also tops Michigan’s Legislature among statewide adults, Ballard said. The state House and Senate “good” or “excellent” grades stood at 25.4 percent this winter. The majority answering the survey gave Michigan’s Legislature a 51.1 percent “fair” rating.
Winter SOSS/2

President Obama’s positive ratings ticked up to 39.7 percent this winter. They were up from 38.3 percent last fall, but down from 48.4 percent in winter 2013. “Obama’s favorable ratings have stayed in the 40 percent range since 2011, but fell below that last fall with the Affordable Care Act rollout and federal sequestration,” Ballard said.

The president’s marks are considerably better than those for the U.S. Congress. Congress came in last in the quarter’s SOSS rankings, with “good” or excellent” ratings from only 8.8 percent of Michigan adults.

Michigan adults also gave poor marks Congress’ two chambers – the U.S. House and U.S. Senate.

Just 11 percent gave the U.S. House a “good” or “excellent” rating, which is the same grade they gave the U.S. Senate. Some 57 percent of survey respondents gave Congress “poor” marks, 48 percent rated U.S. House performance “poor,” and 47 percent graded the U.S. Senate as “poor.”

“Neither one of the chambers of Congress is really doing much better than the other,” said Douglas B. Roberts, director of MSU’s Institute for Public Policy and Social Research.

“In fact, when we looked deeper, we found that no demographic group gave Congress, the House or the Senate great marks,” he said.

Those marks barely budged when political party affiliation was added to the questions about congressional approval. “We wanted to know who really approves of the U.S. Congress,” Roberts said.

“What we found out: We just don’t like Congress very much – even when prompted by the information that the party we favor is in charge.”

This winter’s survey carried a margin of error of about ±3 percent.

SOSS is the only survey conducted in Michigan designed to systematically monitor the public mood on important issues statewide. It has been administered by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research since 1994. IPPSR is a unit of MSU’s College of Social Science.