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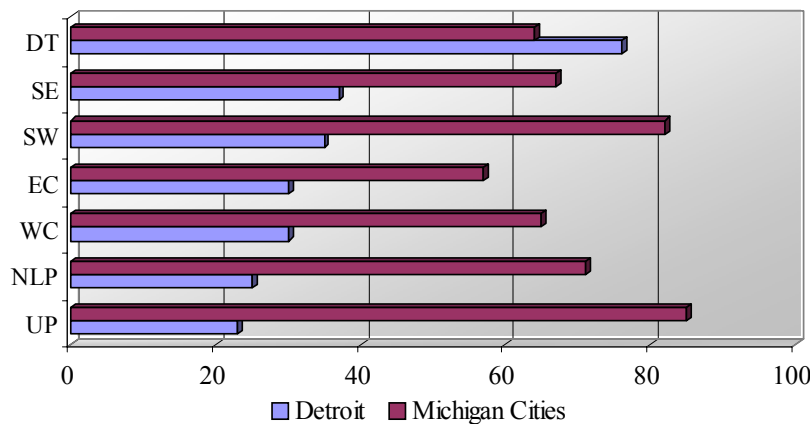
STATE of the STATE Survey

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Few Think Detroit is Very Important to Well-being of Michigan

Percent Saying Cities, Detroit Very Important to Michigan



IPPSR-SOSS Bulletin 03-01

About the Study

The Institute for Public Policy and Social Research conducted the twenty-eighth round of the State of the State Survey (SOSS-28) by phone with 989 Michigan adult residents October 19 through December 31, 2002. The margin of sampling error was $\pm 3.1\%$.

This wave of SOSS provides timely information about citizens' opinions on urban cities and Detroit, urban sprawl, environmental protection, and economic development in cities.

IPPSR's State of the State Survey is the only survey conducted in Michigan that provides a regular systematic monitoring of the public mood on important issues in major regions of the state.

More information on SOSS is online at:
www.ippsr.msu.edu/SOSS.

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Importance of City to State

In the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research's twenty-eighth State of the State Survey (SOSS), respondents were randomly split into two samples, one group responded to questions on Michigan's cities in general and one group answered questions pertaining to the city of Detroit.

On the positive side for cities, some 68% of statewide respondents said Michigan's cities were very important to the well-being of the state as a whole. However, only 36% felt that the well-being of Detroit was very important. When the categories of very and somewhat are combined, the percentages rose to 99% and 92% for Michigan's cities and Detroit.

Some 62% of Republicans and 72% of Democrats thought that Michigan's cities were very important to the well-being of the state, whereas only 23% of Republicans and 55% of Democrats felt that Detroit was very important to the well-being of the state. Some 53% of Blacks and 70% of Whites recognized that cities were very important, but when asked

about Detroit, 68% of Blacks and 32% of Whites recognized the importance of the city to the well-being of Michigan.

This is the second year IPPSR has asked these two questions. It is concerning to note that in late fall 2001, 46% of respondents felt that Detroit was very important to the overall well-being of Michigan, but only one year later, that number fell by ten percentage points.

"Shape" of Michigan's Cities

When asked to assess the "shape" of Michigan's cities and Detroit, the respondents were not very positive about the situation of either. Only 34% of respondents thought that Michigan's cities were in very good or good shape and only 14% felt that way about Detroit.

When this is examined by region, we see that southwest Michigan was most likely to see the shape of Michigan's cities as very good or good and the upper peninsula was the most pessimistic. The biggest difference in shape perception when comparing Michigan cities to Detroit was in the southwest where it dropped from 61% to 15%.

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Rural area residents were more optimistic about the shape of Michigan's cities. Some 45% thought cities were in very good or good shape. Suburbs and urban areas were most pessimistic with 29% thinking cities were in this shape. Suburbs were most pessimistic about Detroit: some 8% thought Detroit was in good or very good shape. The most optimistic were urban dwellers as 19% thought Detroit was in this shape. Racially, the largest difference was in regard to Detroit with 27% of blacks and 13% of Whites thinking Detroit was in very good or good shape.

Most Pressing Problems for Cities, Detroit

Respondents felt that the quality of the public schools were by far the most pressing problem for Michigan's cities — some 80% of respondents said schools were very pressing. The next most important issues were safety and crime (74%) and availability of jobs (66%). The remainder of the issues—roads, public transportation, housing, urban sprawl, racial and ethnic discrimination and immigration garnered less than a majority of the respondents.

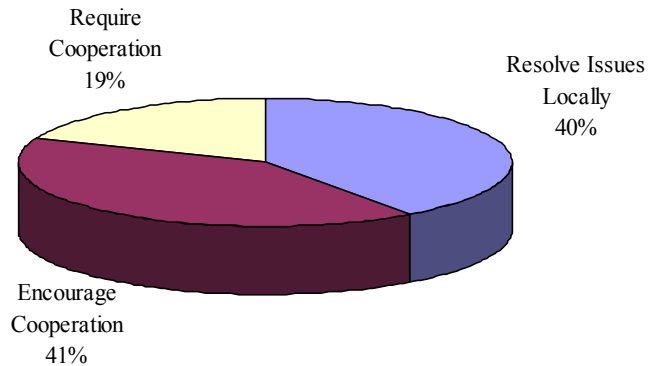
Both Democrats and Republicans were concerned about education and crime in the cities; Democrats were more likely to be concerned about jobs (78% to 50%).

Affordable housing was viewed as a more important problem to Detroit (59% to 49%) and interestingly, racial and ethnic discrimination was viewed as a less important problem (43% to 35%). Urban sprawl was viewed as a more important problem for the well-being of Detroit than Michigan's cities but still garnered only one-third of respondents viewing it as a very pressing problem for Detroit.

Quality of Life

Over the last year, quality of life perception for Michigan residents has stayed about the same. In 2002, 29% reported their quality of life was excellent and 50% said it was good. In 2001, 21% reported it was excellent and 59% said it was good. Quality of life is not consistent for all citizens, however. Those living in suburban areas were the most satisfied. Approximately 36% said that they have an excellent quality of life. Meanwhile, only 20% of those living in urban areas said their quality of life was excellent. Also, less than 50% of Detroit residents reported their overall quality of life was excellent or good, while respondents in most other regions more closely mirrored the overall average for the state.

State's Role in Ensuring Local Cooperation



Regarding the importance of education as a problem to Detroit, suburban residents were much more likely to say it was pressing than urban dwellers (92% to 77%). There was a big difference also in public transportation (56% to 36%). Suburbanites were less likely to see racial discrimination as important in Detroit (22% to 47%).

Who is Responsible for Addressing the Problems?

When asked about Detroit, 69% of Republicans and 53% of Democrats thought that Detroit should solve its own problems. Some 54% of Whites and 45% of Blacks felt Michigan's cities should solve their own problems, but when asked about Detroit, 69% of Whites and 42% of Blacks felt Detroit should go it alone.

Female respondents of the survey were more likely to support the concept that cities and Detroit should take care of their own problems: 56% females and 49% males and 71% females and 60% males, respectively.

There were no real differences between the 2001 and 2002 survey responses on whether Michigan cities should be responsible for addressing problems.

Cooperation Among Local Governments

When asked if local governments work very well together, nearly one quarter of Michigan residents said that they do; over half said that local governments work somewhat well together.

When asked which problems are best addressed by governments working together, the highest percentage was transportation at 82%. Interestingly, land use was the last with 57%, which is still a majority, but less than utilities and affordable housing.

Respondents were also asked about what the state's role should be to ensure local government cooperation. There was not much support for requiring it: less than one fifth felt that the state should ensure cooperation. Democrats were more likely to support this concept (51% to 39%), but otherwise there was not much difference across socioeconomic categories.

2003 Policy Forum Series

February 26, 2003 - 11:30-1:30 p.m.

-Michigan Citizens on School Consolidation

March 26, 2003 - 11:30-1:30 p.m.

-Land Use Planning and Policymaking: Today's Choices, Tomorrow's Impacts

April 30, 2003 - 11:30-1:30 p.m.

- Health Management: Personal Responsibility and the Government Role

May 14, 2003 - 11:30-1:30 p.m.

- Marketing Michigan: Keeping and Attracting Young Professionals

More information online at:

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