

# Michigan Policy Insiders Panel (MPIP) Brief Report - Round 2

Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, IPPSR  
Michigan State University

Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy, CLOSUP  
University of Michigan

Conducted by the:

Office for Survey Research  
Institute for Public Policy and Social Research

October - November 2016

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Institute for Public Policy  
and Social Research  
Office for Survey Research

**CLOSUP**  
Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy  
 Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy  
University of Michigan

# Table of Contents

Overview.....	3
Section A. 2016 Presidential Election.....	4
Table 1. Presidential Vote Preference, by Demographic Characteristic.....	4
Table 2. Expected Presidential Winner, by Party Identification.....	5
Section B. Political Issue Attitudes.....	5
Figure 1. Histogram of Policy Attitudes about Government Services, with Comparison to ANES.....	6
Figure 2. Histogram of Policy Attitudes about Environmental Regulation, with Comparison to ANES.....	7
Figure 3. Histogram of Attitudes Toward Police, with Comparison to SOSS.....	8
Figure 4. Histogram of Openness to Social Change, with Comparison to SOSS.....	9
Section C. Political Party Advantages.....	9
Figure 5. Perceived Political Party Advantages, with Comparison to SOSS.....	10
Table 3. Perceived Best Party at Speaking up for Disadvantaged Groups, by Political Party.....	11

## Overview

The Michigan Policy Insiders Panel (MPIP) is a project of Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, conducted in conjunction with the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy at the University of Michigan. The goal is to understand how policymakers learn about state problems, develop political influence, and interact to produce policy solutions.

The Round 2 survey was fielded from October 19, 2016 to November 1, 2016. Email invitations were sent to 537 MPIP panel members on October 19, and reminder emails were sent on October 24, October 27, and October 31 to those who had not yet completed the survey by the time of the reminder. During this time, 424 respondents access the survey (79.0 percent of the panelists) and 402 completed the survey. Of the 424 who accessed the survey, 94.8 completed it. The overall completion rate for the study is 74.9 percent<sup>1</sup>.

This report includes highlighted results from our Round 2 survey. Additional results and analyses are included in the appendix.

---

<sup>1</sup> The formula for calculating response rates is Completed Interviews (CI) divided by the sum of Completed Interviews (CI), Respondent Refusals (R), and Non Interviews (NI) minus Ineligible Respondents (IE) (respondents who after selection into the sample are determined not to meet study criteria). No one was eliminated from the denominator due to being ineligible for the study. The response rate for this study is calculated as 402 / 537.

## Section A. 2016 Presidential Election

Below, Table 1 summarizes the 2016 presidential election vote preferences among MPIP Round 2 respondents when presented only with a choice between the two major party candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. The results are shown both overall and broken down by party identification, gender, and education level.

**Table 1. Presidential Vote Preference, by Demographic Characteristic**

Demographic Characteristics		Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	No Preference Between These	<i>n</i>
<b>Overall</b>		18%	63%	20%	393
<b>Party Identification<sup>a</sup></b>	Republican	41%	21%	38%	125
	Independent	15%	62%	23%	107
	Democrat	0%	100%	0%	135
<b>Gender</b>	Female	11%	79%	10%	140
	Male	22%	54%	25%	245
<b>Education</b>	No 4-Yr Degree	50%	33%	17%	12
	4-Yr Degree	19%	59%	22%	178
	Graduate Degree	15%	68%	17%	196

<sup>a</sup> Respondents who identified themselves as independent are coded as independents, even if they also said they lean closer to one party.

In general, Table 1 indicates that a wide majority (63 percent) of the insiders in the panel expressed a preference for Hillary Clinton as president, compared to less than one-fifth (18 percent) who said they preferred Donald Trump. Moreover, the results show that:

- Although Democrats generally preferred Clinton and Republicans generally preferred Trump, the Democrats in the sample were far more strongly united behind Clinton (100 percent support) than the Republicans in the sample were united behind Trump (41 percent support). Those who identified themselves as Independent also preferred Clinton by a wide margin (62 percent to 15 percent).
- Men (22 percent) in the sample were about twice as likely as women (11 percent) to express a preference for Donald Trump as president.
- Consistent with a popular narrative about the 2016 election as a whole, support for Hillary Clinton increased with higher levels of formal education. In fact, among those with less than a four-year college degree, Donald Trump enjoyed 50 percent support compared to just 33 percent for Clinton. However, just 12 MPIP respondents fell into this education category, which reflects the “elite” insider status of the MPIP panel, in contrast to the general population where possessing less formal education is significantly more commonplace.

Even individuals with very strong opinions about what they would like to see happen may have expectations about the outcome of the election that differ starkly from their own preferences. Therefore, MPIP panelists were asked not only which candidate they preferred as president, but also who they expected to win the election. The results of this latter question are displayed below, in Table 2.

**Table 2. Expected Presidential Winner, by Party Identification**

Demographic Characteristics		Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	n
<b>Overall</b>		8%	92%	402
<b>Party Identification<sup>a</sup></b>	Republican	16%	85%	129
	Independent	6%	95%	109
	Democrat	1%	99%	136

<sup>a</sup> Respondents who identified themselves as independent are coded as independents, even if they also said they lean closer to one party.

Like most experts and analysts, the vast majority of MPIP panelists went into the 2016 election expecting a Clinton victory, with 92 percent saying they thought Hillary Clinton would win compared to just 8 percent who said they thought Donald Trump would win. Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents and Democrats to predict a win for Trump, but even so they were collectively quite pessimistic about his chances of winning the presidency. Only about 16 percent of Republican respondents correctly predicted that Donald Trump would win the presidency, compared to just 6 percent of Independents and 1 percent of Democrats.

### Section B. Political Issue Attitudes

Insiders were also asked about their opinions on certain public policy areas – namely their attitudes toward government services, regulating businesses to protect the environment, and policing.

These questions were similar to those appearing on either the Michigan State University State of the State Survey, also known as SOSS (which is representative of the general adult population of Michigan); or the University of Michigan's American National Election Studies, also known as ANES (which is representative of the general adult population of the United States). Comparisons to these general populations are shown side-by-side with the results in the following figures.

Specifically, the question about government services asked:

*Some people think the government should provide fewer services even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at Point 1. Other people think it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Suppose these people are at the other end, at Point 7. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale?*

Based on this question wording, possible answers ranged from 1 to 7 where lower values correspond to more conservative positions (i.e., a preference for fewer government services) and higher values correspond to more liberal positions (i.e., a preference for more government services).

The distribution of responses to this question is shown below in Figure 1, along with a comparison to the general United States population as estimated using data from the ANES.

**Figure 1. Histogram of Policy Attitudes about Government Services, with Comparison to ANES**

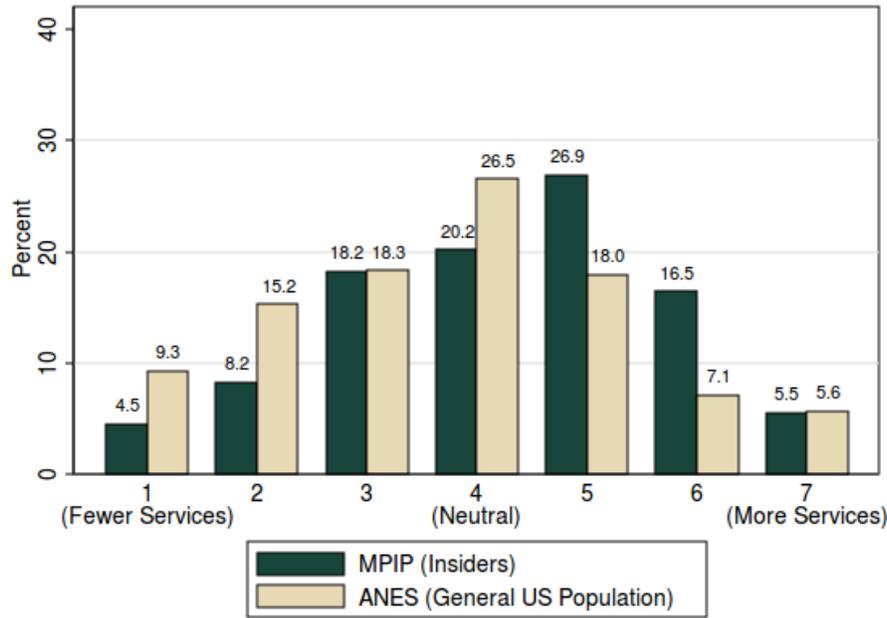


Figure 1 illustrates that:

- Even though the Round 2 sample included a roughly equal proportion of self-identified Democrats and Republicans, about half of MPIP respondents (49 percent) placed themselves at Point 5 or higher on the Government Services scale, indicating at least some preference for more government services even if it means an increase in spending. By contrast, just 31 percent placed themselves at Point 3 or lower, indicating a preference for fewer services in order to reduce spending.
- On average, Michigan political insiders in the MPIP panel expressed a stronger preference for more government services than did the general US population.
- At the same time, the MPIP panel was also less polarized on this question than the US general population, with a smaller proportion of respondents selecting the most extreme answer choices on either end of the spectrum.

Next, the question about environmental regulation of businesses specifically asked:

*Some people think the government needs to regulate business to protect the environment. They think that efforts to protect the environment will create jobs. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at Point 1. Others think that the government should not regulate business to protect the environment. They think this regulation will not do much to help the environment and will cost us jobs. Suppose these people are at the other end, at Point 7. Again, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6. Where would place yourself on this scale?*

As before, the possible answers ranged from 1 to 7, but for ease of interpretation and comparison to other questions, the responses were re-coded such that lower values would again correspond to more conservative positions (i.e., a preference for less regulation) and higher values correspond to more liberal positions (i.e., a preference for more regulation). The distribution of responses to this question is shown below in Figure 2, along with a comparison to the general United States population as estimated using data from the ANES.

The distribution of responses to this question is shown below in Figure 2, along with a comparison to the general United States population as estimated using data from the ANES.

**Figure 2. Histogram of Policy Attitudes about Environmental Regulation, with Comparison to ANES**

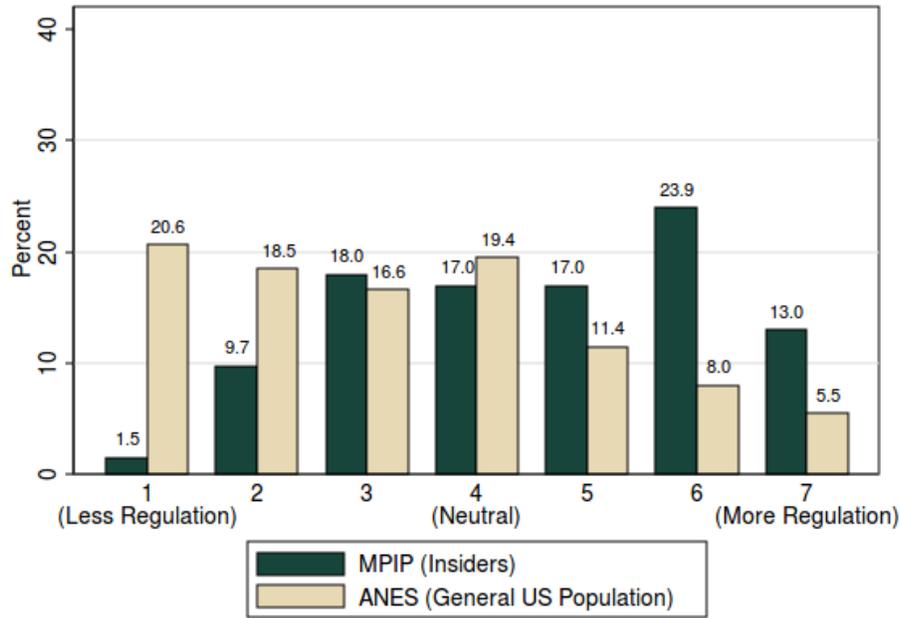


Figure 2 illustrates that:

- Over half of MPIP respondents (54 percent) placed themselves at Point 5 or higher on the Government Services scale (indicating at least some preference for more government regulation in order to protect the environment), versus 29 percent who placed themselves at Point 3 or lower (indicating a preference for fewer services in order to reduce spending).
- On average, Michigan political insiders in the MPIP panel expressed a *much stronger preference for environmental regulation* than did the general US population. Over one-third of Michigan insiders (37 percent) placed themselves at Point 6 or higher on the scale, compared to less than 14 percent of the general US population.

Finally, respondents' attitudes toward police were measured using a pair of survey items which asked them to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements:

*Media and public attention make it too hard for police officers to do their jobs*

*Police officers often use too much force in carrying out their duties.*

Responses to each question ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree on a five-point scale. These items were then combined to create a single nine-point Police Attitudes scale, where lower values correspond to more negative opinions toward police (i.e., that police use too much force and that the media do *not* make it too hard for them to do their jobs) and higher values correspond to more positive opinions toward police (i.e., that police do *not* use too much force and the media make it too hard for them to do their jobs).

The distribution of responses to this question is shown below in Figure 3, along with a comparison to the general Michigan population as estimated using data from SOSS.

**Figure 3. Histogram of Attitudes Toward Police, with Comparison to SOSS**

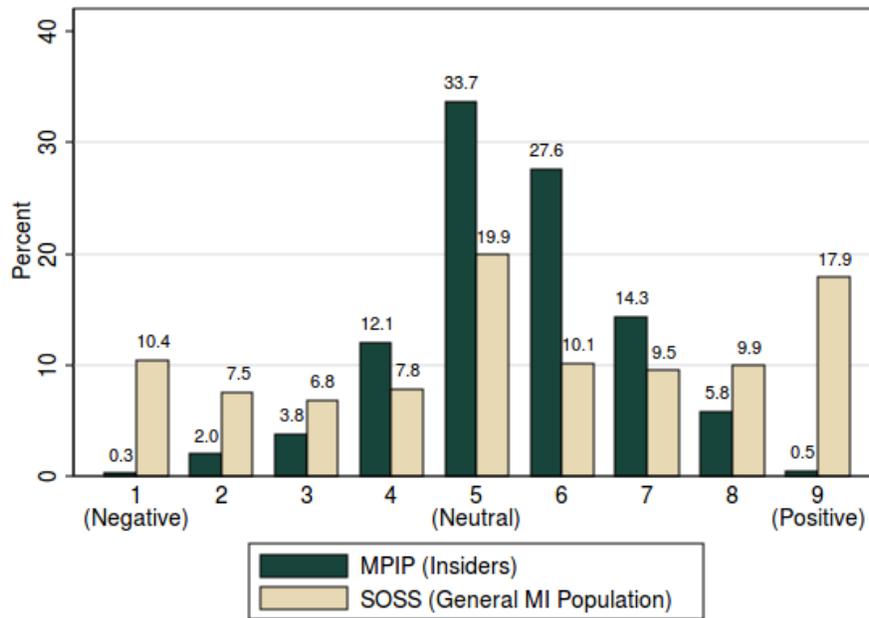


Figure 3 shows that:

- Michigan policy insiders expressed relatively centrist attitudes toward police officers, with nearly three-fourths (73 percent) falling at one of the middle three values (Points 4, 5, or 6) on the scale.
- On average, the attitudes expressed by the panel of insiders were more positive than negative toward police, with 48 percent falling at Point 6 or above on the scale and just 18 percent falling at Point 4 or below.
- Although the mean score among MPIP panelists on the nine-point scale (5.49) was nearly identical to the mean score among SOSS respondents (5.44), the MPIP panel was much *less polarized* on this topic than the Michigan general population, with a far smaller proportion of respondents falling at the extreme ends of the spectrum.

Lastly, insiders were asked about their attitudes toward social change in general. The questions were similar to those appearing on Michigan State University's State of the State Survey, which allows for side-by-side comparisons to the general population of Michigan adults. Openness to social change was measured using a pair of survey items which asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

*Our country is changing too fast, undermining traditional American values.*

*By accepting diverse cultures and lifestyles, our country is steadily improving.*

Responses to each item ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree on a five-point scale. These items were then combined to create a single nine-point Openness to Social Change scale, where lower values correspond to more negative opinions toward social change (i.e., that the country is changing too fast and that the country is *not* improving by accepting diverse cultures) and higher values correspond to more positive opinions toward social change (i.e., that the country is *not* changing too fast and that the country is improving by accepting diverse cultures).

The distribution of responses to this question is shown below in Figure 4, along with a comparison to the general Michigan population as estimated using data from SOSS.

**Figure 4. Histogram of Openness to Social Change, with Comparison to SOSS**

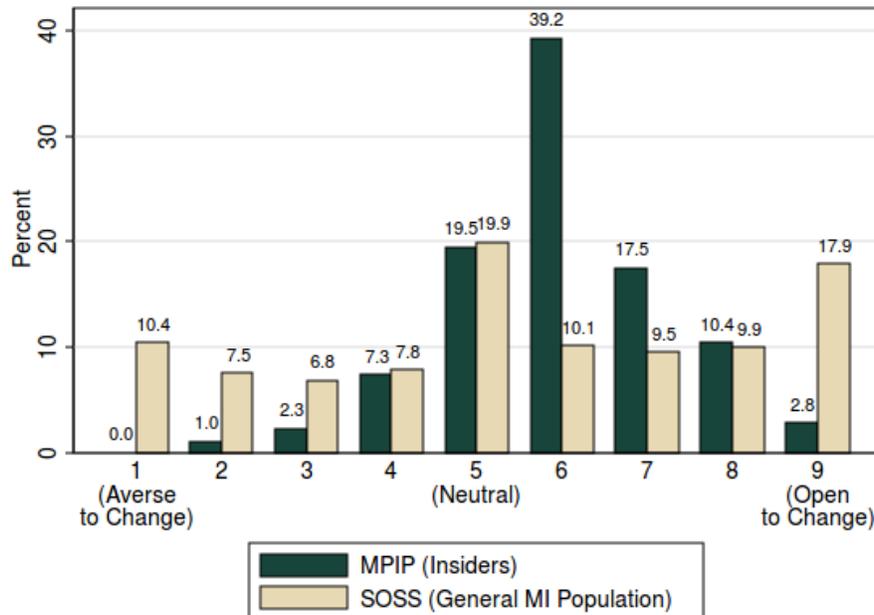


Figure 4 shows that:

- Michigan policy insiders expressed relatively centrist attitudes toward social change, with nearly two-thirds (66 percent) falling at one of the middle three values (Points 4, 5, or 6) on the scale.
- On average, the attitudes expressed by the panel of insiders were more positive than negative social change by a wide margin, with 70 percent falling at Point 6 or above on the scale and just 11 percent falling at Point 4 or below.
- The mean score among MPIP panelists on the nine-point scale (6.02) was somewhat more positive toward social change than the mean score among SOSS respondents (5.44).
- The MPIP panel was also much *less polarized* on this topic than the Michigan general population, with a far smaller proportion of respondents falling at the extreme ends of the spectrum.

### Section C. Political Party Advantages

Respondents were also given a series of items to measure perceptions of the particular advantages of each political party. Specifically, the survey asked:

*Regardless of which political party you normally support, which political party do you think is better at each of the following?*

*Speaking up for disadvantaged groups in our society*

*Speaking up for American principles and values*

*Proposing specific policies that respond to new social problems*

*Ensuring that government stays in its proper role in our society*

Figure 5, below, shows the distribution of responses to all four of these items, along with side-by-side comparisons to the perceptions of the general adult population of Michigan, as measured by MSU's State of the State Survey.

NOTE: The MPIP online questionnaire specifically listed “Equally Good or Equally Not Good” as an answer choice, whereas the SOSS telephone instrument did not explicitly list this option and instead required respondents to offer that answer on their own. Therefore, the results of these questions may not be perfectly comparable across these two surveys.

**Figure 5. Perceived Political Party Advantages, with Comparison to SOSS**

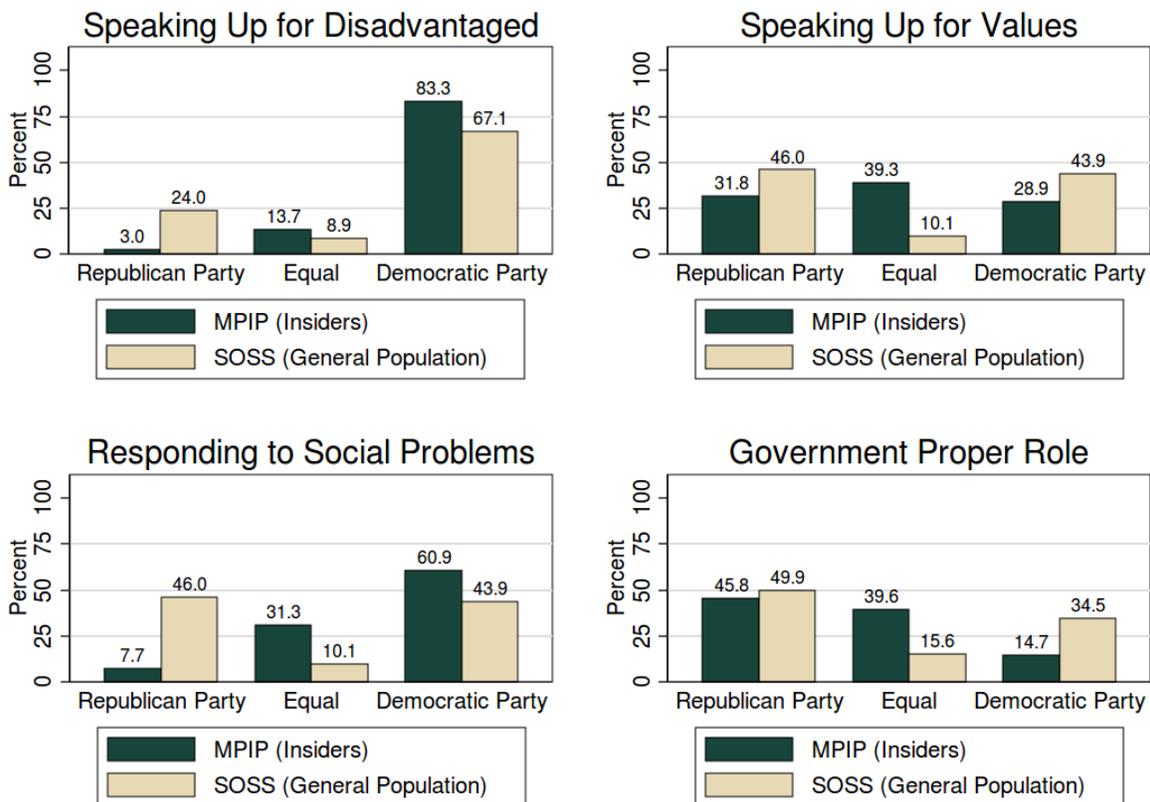


Figure 5 suggests that MPIP respondents:

- Rated the *Democratic Party* as the better party at speaking up for disadvantaged groups,
- Rated the *Republican Party* as the better party at keeping government in its proper role,
- Rated the two parties about evenly at speaking up for American principles and values, and
- Collectively indicated a much clearer advantage for one party over the other in three out of the four areas than did members of the general population. This may be a product of the aforementioned difference in question wording, and/or because the insiders were more aware or more willing than the mass public to acknowledge the strengths of the party they do not normally support.

Table 3, below, summarizes the responses to these same party advantage questions for insiders with different

partisan affiliations. The results generally suggest that respondents' personal party identification is correlated with their perceptions of which party is better in each area, yet in a few particular cases, partisans from both sides actually agree on which party has the advantage.

**Table 3. Perceived Best Party at Speaking up for Disadvantaged Groups, by Political Party**

Demographic Characteristics		Republican Party	Equal	Democratic Party	n
<b><i>Which political party is better at speaking up for disadvantaged groups in society?</i></b>					
<b>Overall</b>		3%	14%	83%	402
<b>Party Identification<sup>a</sup></b>	Republican	8%	23%	69%	129
	Independent	1%	14%	85%	109
	Democrat	0%	3%	97%	136
<b><i>Which political party is better at speaking up for American principles and values?</i></b>					
<b>Overall</b>		32%	39%	29%	402
<b>Party Identification<sup>a</sup></b>	Republican	65%	33%	2%	129
	Independent	29%	46%	25%	109
	Democrat	3%	40%	57%	136
<b><i>Which political party is better at proposing policies that respond to new social problems?</i></b>					
<b>Overall</b>		8%	31%	61%	402
<b>Party Identification<sup>a</sup></b>	Republican	17%	48%	35%	129
	Independent	6%	31%	63%	109
	Democrat	1%	14%	85%	136
<b><i>Which political party is better at ensuring government stays in its proper role in society?</i></b>					
<b>Overall</b>		46%	40%	15%	402
<b>Party Identification<sup>a</sup></b>	Republican	84%	16%	1%	129
	Independent	40%	50%	9%	109
	Democrat	16%	52%	32%	136
<sup>a</sup> Respondents who identified themselves as independent are coded as independents, even if they also said they lean closer to one party.					

Additional results and methodological details are available in the appendix to this short report. A full report will eventually be publicly available at [ippsr.msu.edu](http://ippsr.msu.edu).