

11th Michigan Policy Insiders Panel (MPIP) And 84nd State of the State Survey (SOSS) Brief Report

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OVERVIEW

This report is a summary of some of the key findings from The Michigan Policy Insiders Panel (MPIP) Round 11 and recent State of the State Survey (SOSS) Wave 84. These two web-based surveys were run in Spring 2022. Most of the sections are a comparison of the two populations on the same or similar questions. A few of the results reported were only asked of either the MPIP or the SOSS respondents.

MPIP is a project of Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR), in conjunction with the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) 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 targeted population for the MPIP panel included all persons regarded as "political Insiders" in the State of Michigan. This included high-ranking members of state government agencies, current members of Michigan's Legislature and their staff assistants, association and corporate lobbyists, state relations officers, think tanks, public relations professionals, and state political media personnel. The panel, originally created in 2016, continues to be expanded with the most recent invitations to join the panel sent in 2021.

The MPIP, Round 11, survey was fielded from April 14, 2022 to May 3, 2022. Email invitations were sent to 753 MPIP panel members on April 14, and reminder emails were sent on April 19, April 22, April 27, and May 1 to those who had not yet completed the questionnaire by the time of the reminder. Of those sent invites, 43 emails bounced back or emails failed to deliver. During this time, 225 respondents accessed the survey (29.9 percent of the panelists) and 192 completed it. Of the 224 who accessed the survey, 85.3 percent completed it. The overall completion rate for the study is 27.0 percent¹. MPIP panel respondents will be referred to as "MPIP Insiders" throughout the report.

This report also summarizes a portion of the key findings from the most recent SOSS, a Michigan general adult population survey. The survey has been run since 1994 either as a RDD telephone survey (1994 - 2020) or as a [YouGov](#) web panel survey (2020 - current). Due to the difference in methodology between the telephone mode and the web panel mode, comparisons between the telephone mode and the web panel mode will not be reported.

The current survey (Wave 84) was completed as a YouGov panel survey with data collection from April 12, 2022 to April 21, 2022. Invitations were initially sent to 3,826 adult Michigan residents and 1,193 interviews were completed by adult Michigan residents. The response rate for this round of SOSS was 32.1%². The final dataset included 1,000 cases after the calibration process used to assign weights was completed. Data was weighted using the "weight" variable for all analysis unless otherwise stated. SOSS respondents will be referred to as "SOSS respondents" or "general public" throughout the report.

¹ The formula for calculating the completion rate was 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). The 43 respondents whose emails were not delivered were eliminated from the denominator. The completion rate for this study is calculated as $192 / (753 - 43) = .270$.

² Response rate was calculated by YouGov using AAPOR RR3.

RESULTS

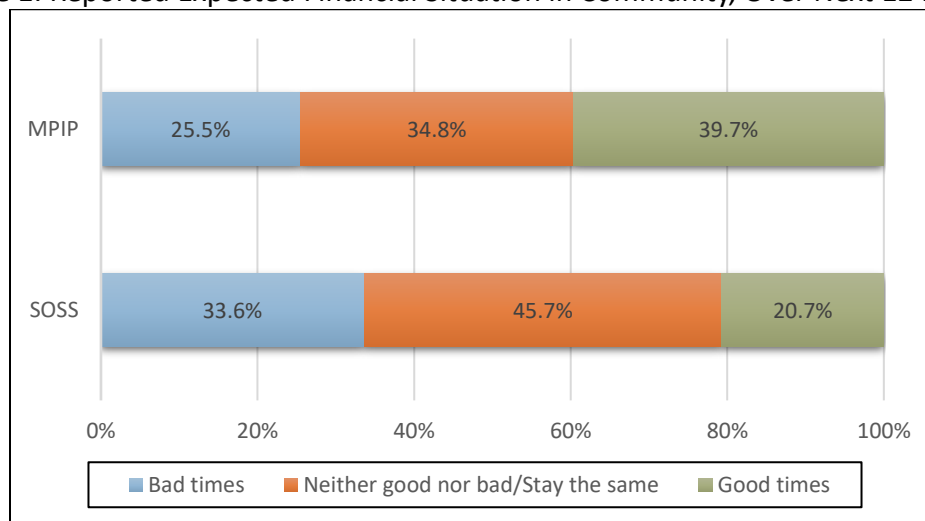
Section A. Economic Optimism

Both MPIP Insiders and SOSS respondents were asked about their expectations for certain economic indicators for their community and the country as a whole during the next 12 months.

Respondents were asked *“Now turning to business conditions in your community, do you think that during the next twelve months your community will have good times financially, or bad times financially?”*

The responses to this item are summarized in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows that MPIP Insiders are much more optimistic of the future financial situation in their communities than the general population.

Figure 1: Reported Expected Financial Situation in Community, Over Next 12 Months



Sample sizes: MPIP = 184, SOSS = 994

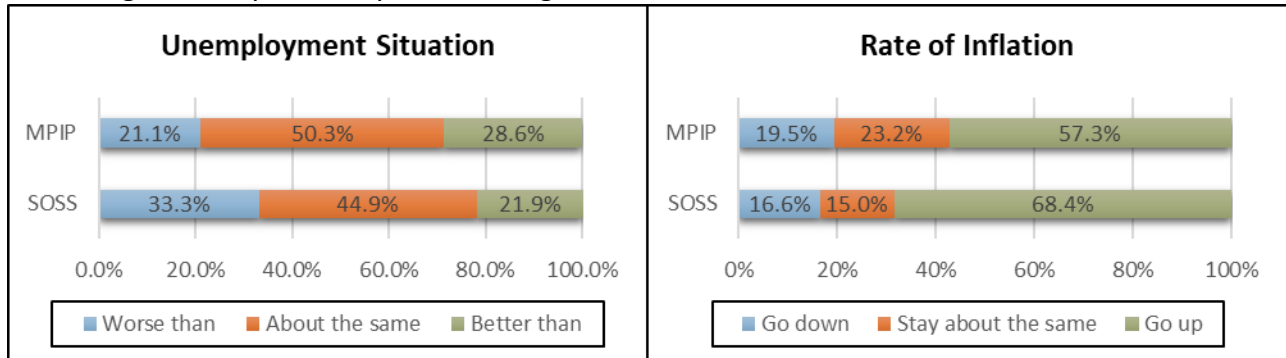
In particular:

- MPIP Insiders were most likely (40 percent) to expect the financial situation in their community to be good in the next 12 months than SOSS respondents (21 percent).
- SOSS respondents were the most likely (34 percent) to report that they expected the financial situation to be bad in the next 12 months compared to MPIP Insiders (26 percent). They were also the mostly likely (46 percent vs. 35 percent) to believe that it would stay the same or be neither good nor bad.

In addition, they were asked:

- *“Twelve months from now, do you expect the unemployment situation in this country to be better than, worse than, or about the same as it was in the last 12 months?”*
- *“During the next twelve months, do you think the rate of inflation in this country will go up, will go down, or will stay about the same as it was in the past 12 months?”*

Figure 2. Reported Expected Change in Economic Indicators, Over Next 12 Months



Sample sizes: MPIP = 185/185, SOSS = 999/1001

Figure 2 reports the results for these two variables for MPIP Insiders and SOSS respondents. As with their outlook on their communities' economic situation, MPIP Insiders were more optimistic in terms of unemployment and the rate of inflation.

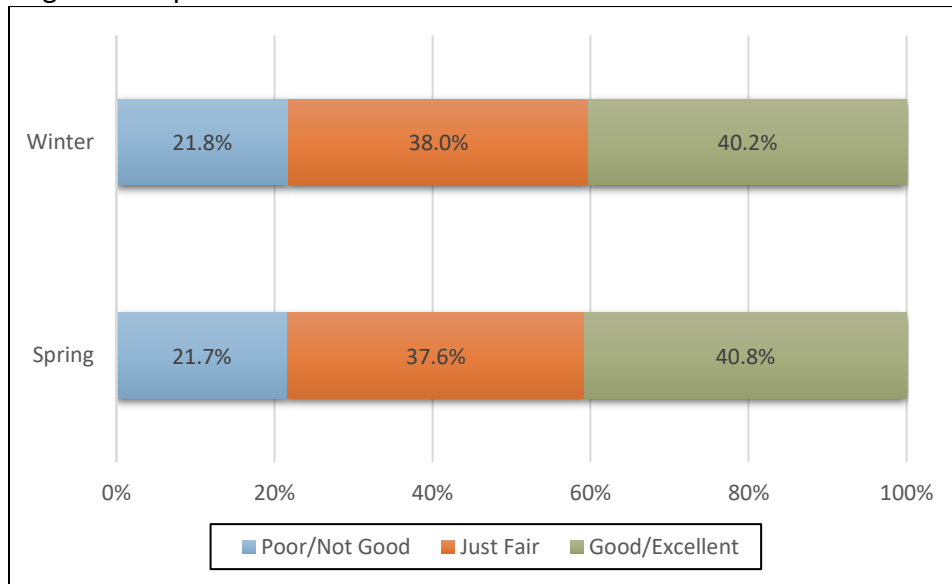
Specifically, the figure shows:

- 79 percent of MPIP Insiders felt that the unemployment situation would stay the same or improve.
- 78 percent of the SOSS respondents felt that the unemployment situation would get worse or stay the same.
- 57 percent of the MPIP Insiders felt that the rate of inflation would increase.
- 68 percent of the SOSS respondents felt that the rate of inflation would increase.

In addition, SOSS respondents were asked additional questions about their household financial situation. Though we are unable to compare their responses with those of the MPIP Insiders, we can compare them to the previous SOSS round (SOSS 83 – Winter 2021).

Respondents were asked about their own household's financial situation (including their family living with them). The questionnaire asked, *"How would you rate your household's overall financial situation these days?"* Their responses to this item in the current round (Spring 2022) and the previous round of SOSS (Winter 2021) are summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Reported Assessment of Current Household Financial Situation

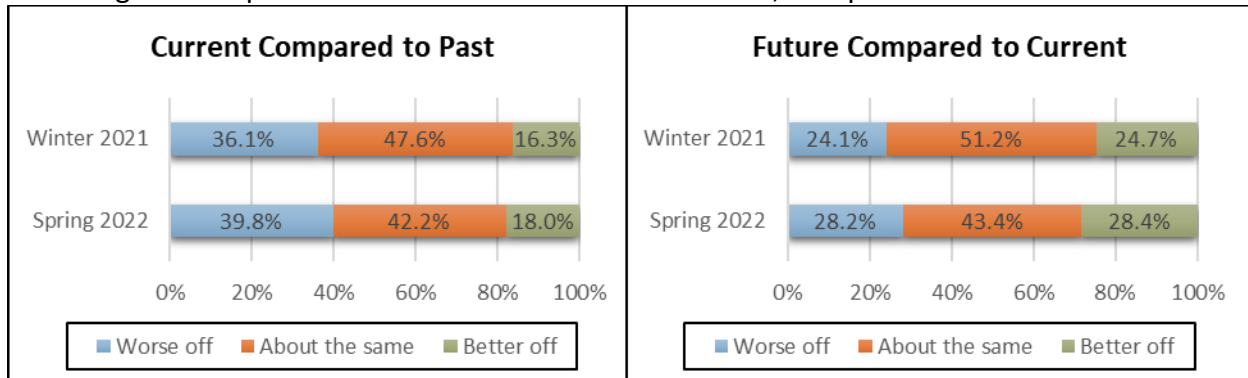


SOSS Sample sizes: Winter 2021 = 998, Spring 2022 = 1000

Figure 3 shows a general consistency in the SOSS respondents' views of their personal household financials between Winter 2021 and Spring 2022.

Next, they were asked whether they are currently better off, worse off, or about the same as they were a year ago. In addition, they were asked whether they think that a year from now, they will be better off, worse off, or about the same as they are now.

Figure 4. Reported Assessment of Financial Situation, Compared to Past and Future



SOSS Sample sizes: Winter 2021 = 991/996, Spring 2022 = 999/996

The results of these items, for both Winter 2021 and the Spring 2022, are presented in Figure 4, which shows that:

- There was a slight increase in those that reported that they were worse off compared to a year ago with 36 percent reporting worse off in Winter 2021 and 39 percent reporting the same in Spring 2022.
- There was a general decrease in those reporting that it was about the same (48 percent vs. 42 percent) and a slight increase in those that said it was improved (16 percent vs 18 percent).

- More felt that their financial situation would be worse off in a year in Spring 2022 (28 percent) compared to Winter 2021 (24 percent).
- Slightly more Spring 2022 respondents felt that their financial situation would improve in the future compared to the Winter 2021 (28 percent vs. 25 percent).

Section B. Assessment of Political Leaders

Both MPIP Insiders and SOSS respondents were asked to measure their personal assessments of particular elected officials. The questionnaire asked panelists to rate the performance of Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and United States President Joe Biden as *excellent*, *good*, *fair*, or *poor*. The same questions have appeared on previous waves of the MPIP and SOSS surveys, including then-Governor Rick Snyder and then-President Donald Trump. Parallel questions were not asked of MPIP Insiders and SOSS respondents during all of the same time periods. Also, due to methodological changes, the SOSS respondent data is only reported starting with SOSS Fall 2019. Figure 5a shows the mean approval rating of these executives at each time point for MPIP Insiders.

Figure 5a. Mean Approval Ratings of Executives for MPIP Insiders, Tracked Over Time

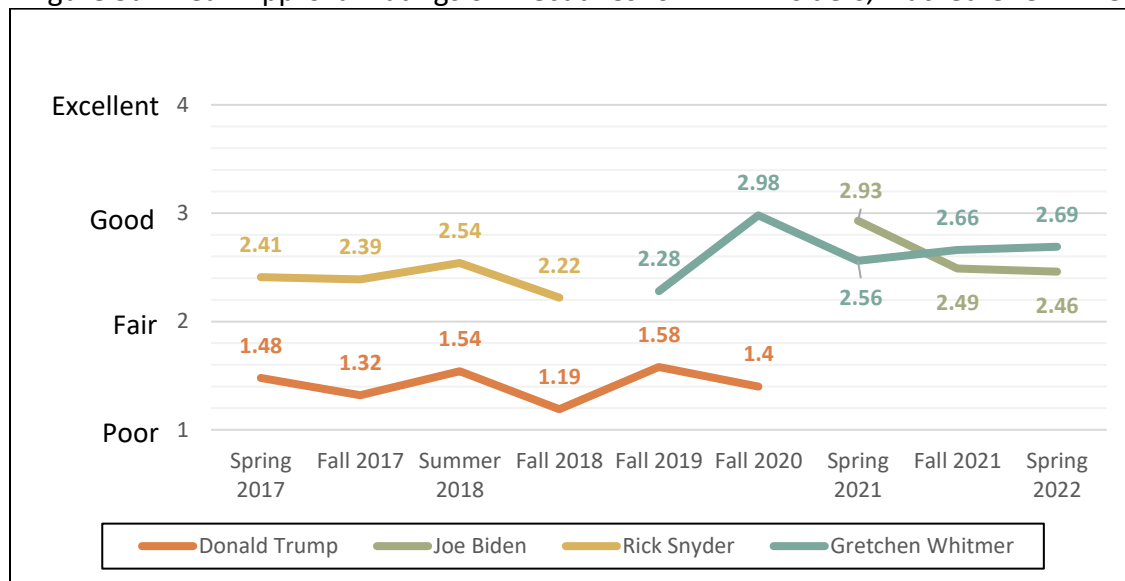


Figure 5a indicates that:

- Governor Whitmer received an average rating of 2.66 out of 4.00 from the MPIP Insiders in Spring 2022 which corresponds approximately to a *fair* to *good* rating and represents a slight increase from 2.49 in Fall 2021.
- President Biden received an average rating of 2.49 out of 4.00 in Fall 2021 which corresponds approximately to a *fair* to *good* rating and represents a decrease from 2.93 in Spring 2021.

Figure 5b. Mean Approval Ratings of Executives for SOSS Respondents, Tracked Over Time

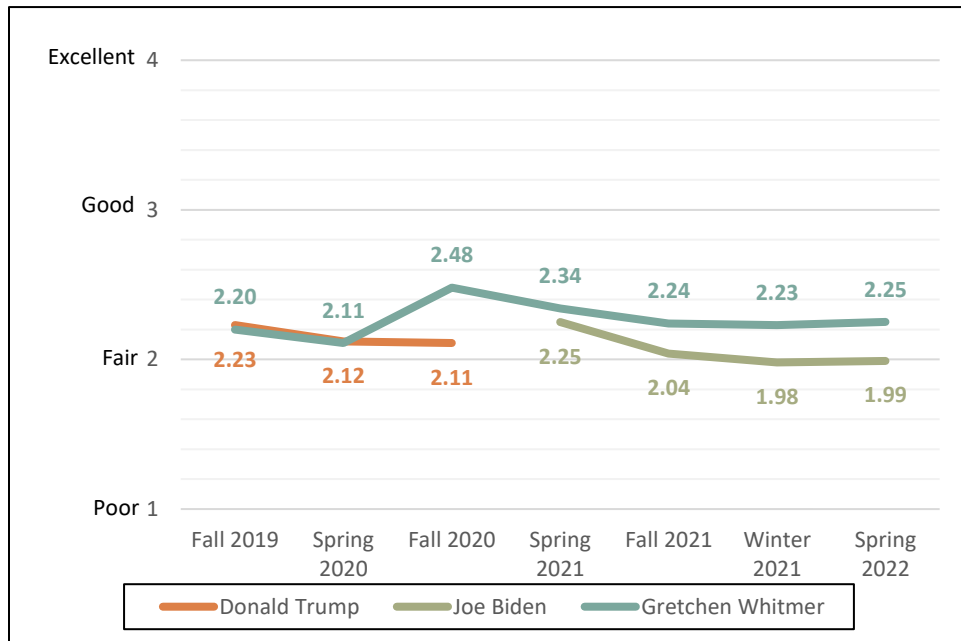


Figure 5b indicates that:

- Governor Whitmer received an average rating of 2.25 out of 4.00 from the SOSS respondents in Spring 2022 which corresponds approximately to a *fair* to *good* rating and represents a slight increase from 2.23 in Winter 2021.
- President Biden received an average rating of 1.99 out of 4.00 in Fall 2021 which corresponds approximately to a *poor* to *fair* rating and is consistent with his rating in Winter 2021 (1.98).

Comparing Figure 5a and Figure 5b, we can see:

- MPIP Insiders (2.69) rated Governor Whitmer higher than the SOSS respondents (2.25) during Spring 2022 and consistently rating her higher during the same time periods.
- MPIP Insiders (2.46) rated President Biden higher than the SOSS respondents (1.99) during Spring 2022 and consistently rated him higher than SOSS respondents.

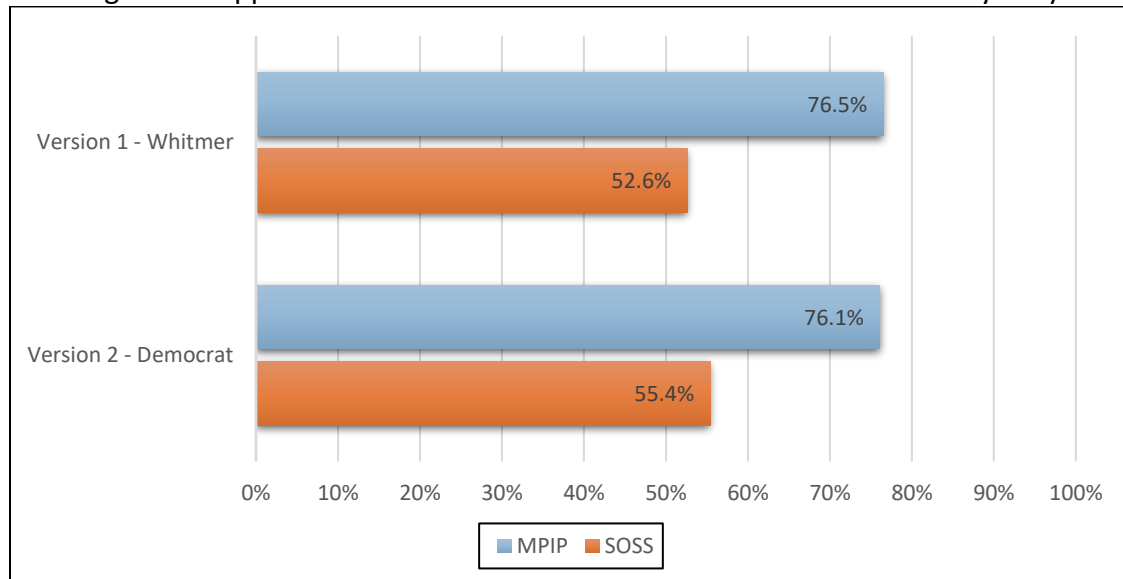
Section C. 2022 State of Michigan Election Expectations

MPIP Panelists and SOSS respondents were asked a series of questions about their expectations for the 2022 Governor and State Legislature Elections. In terms of the Governor's race, both MPIP Insiders and SOSS respondents were randomly assigned to one of two question variations about who they would support in the gubernatorial race in November 2022. The variation centered around whether or not Gretchen Whitmer was specifically identified as the Democratic candidate or not:

- *Which candidate would you most support for Governor, Gretchen Whitmer, the Democrat, or whichever candidate wins the Republican nomination? (Version 1)*
- *Which political party would you most support for Governor, the Democratic or Republican party? (Version 2)*

For those who were undecided, an additional question was asked for both versions which asked “*If you absolutely had to decide today, who would you lean toward?*” The results below are based on those who selected a candidate either during the first question or the probing question. Those who were still undecided were excluded from the analysis.

Figure 6: Support for Democratic Candidate: Candidate Name vs. Party Only



Sample size: Version 1 MPIP =85, SOSS=416/Version 2 MPIP=88, SOSS=424

Figure 6 compares the percent who reported supporting Governor Whitmer between the two versions and between the MPIP Insiders and the SOSS respondents. Though the two question versions show little difference in responses, there is considerable differences between MPIP Insiders and SOSS respondents.

Specifically,

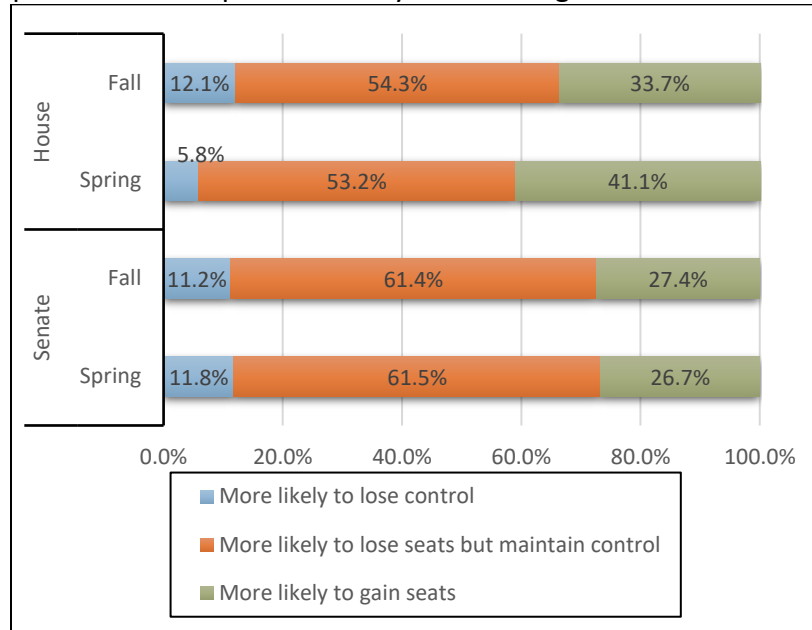
- The percentage of people who supported Governor Whitmer for the two versions of questions asked MPIP Insiders were almost identical (77 percent vs 76 percent)
- The percentage of respondents who supported re-electing Governor Whitmer varied only slightly for the two versions (53 percent vs 55 percent).
- MPIP Insiders were much more likely to support Governor Whitmer’s re-election than SOSS respondents for both versions with a 24-percentage point difference for Version 1 and a 20-percentage point difference for Version 2.

MPIP Insiders were also asked about their expectations for the Michigan Legislature races in terms of Republican seats – “How do you expect **Republicans** to do in the 2022 elections to the **Michigan House of Representatives**?” and “How do you expect **Republicans** to do in the 2022 elections to the **Michigan Senate**?” Though SOSS respondents were not asked these questions, a comparison can be made between the responses from this current round of MPIP (Round 11) and the previous round (Round 10) completed in Fall 2021.

Figure 7 compares MPIP Insiders responses for the State House of Representative and the State Senate and indicates:

- For both the House of Representatives and the Senate, more than half of Spring 2022 MPIP Insiders (53 percent/62 percent) predicted that Republicans would lose seats, but maintain control.
- Spring 2022 MPIP Insiders (41 percent) were more likely to report that Republicans would gain seats in the House than their Fall 2021 counterparts (34 percent) and less likely to report losing control (6 percent vs. 12 percent).
- In terms of the same question about the Senate, there were little to no changes in response percentages between Fall 2021 and Spring 2022.

Figure 7: Expectations of Republican Party Maintaining Control in 2022 State Elections



Sample size Fall=199, Spring=190/Fall=197, Spring=187

SUMMARY

The findings of this report suggest that the MPIP Insiders are different from their general public (SOSS respondents) counterparts on several issues. Below are summarized some difference found between MPIP Insiders and the general public.

Assessment of Political Leaders

MPIP Insiders reported a higher approval rating for both Governor Whitmer and President Biden than did the general public. When comparing the most recent MPIP Insider and SOSS respondents' ratings with the previous round (Fall 2021), Governor Whitmer's rating increased slightly and President Biden's dropped for both groups.

Economic Optimism

Both MPIP Insiders and SOSS respondents were asked a portion of this series of questions about economic optimism. MPIP Insiders were generally more optimistic in terms of the 12-month financial outlook of their community, as well as the unemployment situation and the rate of inflation compared to the general public.

SOSS respondents were also asked additional questions. Little change was found in responses between Winter 2021 and Spring 2022 in terms of the respondents' current financial situation with good/excellent receiving the highest percent of responses. There were slight changes when respondents compared their current financial situation to 12 months ago with slight increases in those who said it had gotten worse as well as a slight increase that said it had gotten better. The same pattern held for looking at future expectations compared to their current financial situation.

2022 State of Michigan Election Expectations

Two versions of questions related to which gubernatorial candidate the respondent supported were randomly presented to both MPIP Insiders and SOSS respondents. Question versions did not appear to have any more than a slight impact on the percentage of respondents that selected Governor Whitmer over the Republican candidate. Differences between MPIP Insiders and the general public were apparent with MPIP Insiders being much more supportive of Governor Whitmer than the general public.

Questions from the previous round of MPIP, asking about retaining control of the State House and Senate, were asked again of MPIP Insiders. More than half of the MPIP Insiders reported that they believed that the Republicans would lose seats, but maintain control in both the State House and Senate. Spring 2022 MPIP Insiders were more likely to report that they believed the Republicans would either lose control or gain seats than their Fall 2021 counterparts. In terms of the House, there was little change between the responses given in the Fall 2021 MPIP Survey and the current survey.

APPENDIX

Table A1: Demographic Description of MPIP and SOSS Respondents

Demographic Characteristics		MPIP Wave 11 ^a	SOSS 84 ^a
Party	Republican	27.7%	37.7%
	Independent	35.6%	19.0%
	Democrat	36.7%	43.2%
Race/Ethnicity ^b	White	91.0%	82.8%
	Black	8.1%	13.0%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	*	2.8%
	Native American/Alaska Native	*	2.0%
	Other Race	*	3.1%
	Hispanic	1.2%	4.4%
Gender	Male	62.4%	48.7%
	Female	37.6%	51.3%
	Intersex	0.0%	0.0%
Education	Less than 4 year Degree	4.8%	73.1%
	4-Year Degree	45.0%	14.0%
	Graduate Degree	50.3%	13.0%
n		192	1000
^a MPIP percentages are unweighted. SOSS percentages are weighted using survey weights provided by YouGov.			
^b Racial/ethnic categories are not mutually exclusive and respondents may have selected more than one.			
* Information not available for MPIP respondents.			