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Michigan Voters Demand Greater Investments in Children and Youth, According to New Statewide Opinion Poll Issued by The Skillman Foundation and Michigan's Children
Public Concerned Children's Needs Not Being Met; Advocates Reveal Results at Detroit Regional Chamber's 2021 Mackinac Policy Conference

(Sept. 20, 2021) – **Nearly two-thirds of Michiganders** say they would support increasing public funding for children and youth to counter inequities and the effects of pandemic-related ills, including disrupted learning and impaired mental health (anxiety, depression, ADHD), according to findings of a new poll commissioned by The Skillman Foundation and Michigan's Children.

The survey of 800 likely general election voters across every region in the state revealed deep concerns for children's economic security, health care, mental health, and safety with overwhelming voter support to pay for programs that help youth lead healthy, productive lives. Among those top of mind for voters: preschool and child care, afterschool programs, jobs and skills training, and programs aimed at reducing juvenile justice involvement.

The poll was conducted by Lake Research Partners from July 27 to Aug. 3. It showed that **62 percent of respondents** backed increased funding for children. The poll has a margin of error (up or down) of 3.46 percent. Principals discussed its findings and implications for future child advocacy campaigns at the **Detroit Regional Chamber's Mackinac Policy Conference** on Monday (4 p.m. EST). They included Angelique Power, president & CEO of The Skillman Foundation; Matt Gillard, president & CEO of Michigan's Children; and Celinda Lake, president of Lake Research Partners. ***(Media interviews are welcomed. The session was streamed online at detroitchamber.com.)***

"This is a moment for Michigan," Power said. "Despite polarizing times, Michiganders across race, ethnicity, gender, economics, and geography are loudly saying *We Must All Invest in Children*. To me, this isn't a request, it's a full-throated mandate."

Voters said they would favor greater state investments to help the state's two million children and youth overcome challenges in educational pursuits, health and well-being, trauma and poverty--**even it means raising taxes**. Fifty-eight percent of voters from across all regions and demographics said they would vote to raise their taxes in order to help improve the lives and future prospects of Michigan's children.

"The important connection to make is that voters can envision a brighter future for our state and Michigan's economic prosperity if we start making wise investments in the next generation of citizens today," Gillard said. "This is a message ringed with urgency and hope to improve prospects and outcomes for all Michigan's children. That means fewer children experiencing abuse or neglect, children better equipped for the workforce, fewer numbers of youth involved in the juvenile justice system, improved mental health, and greater economic and racial equity."

Those surveyed offered strong clarity in where investments should be made, too. Voters said they would strongly support or somewhat support improved resources in: jobs and skills training programs (85 percent); programs that improve mental health (83 percent); programs that reduce numbers of youth in the criminal justice system (82 percent); afterschool programs that provide quality childcare and enrichment (81 percent); programs that increase children's safety and security (78 percent); and more affordable quality childcare for working families (78 percent).

"Increasing funding for children and young people is the majority position for Michigan voters—across the board. With significant concerns over learning losses, mental health, and falling behind because of barriers that prevent them from regularly attending school, we expect child advocates and legislators will use this valuable information to address the children's issues that have the greatest public will behind them—and which issues must require further and immediate advocacy to build awareness and support," Celinda Lake said.

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[The Skillman Foundation](#) is a private philanthropy that serves as a fierce champion of Detroit children. The Foundation works to ensure Detroit youth achieve their highest aspirations by strengthening K-12 public education, afterschool learning opportunities, and college and career pathways. It's served as a voice for children since 1960.

[Michigan's Children](#) is an independent voice working to reduce disparities in child outcomes from cradle through career through policy change. It has served to improve the odds for all children and families in Michigan for more than 25 years.