

SURVEY: OVER TWO THIRDS OF MICHIGAN AUTOWORKERS, OTHER STATE RESIDENTS SUPPORT 40 MPG FUEL-EFFICIENCY RULE, MORE CLIMATE CURBS

Survey Finds 31 Percent of Households in State Tied to Auto Industry, 84 Percent Say Auto Industry is in “Major Trouble” Today; Autoworker, Other Views Track With Rest of U.S.

WASHINGTON, D.C.//February 28, 2007//Michigan residents are not cutting Detroit any slack when it comes to increasing fuel efficiency and decreasing global warming pollution. More than two thirds of Michigan autoworker households (67 percent) and a slightly higher level of all households in the state (72 percent) say that Washington could “help U.S. automakers be more competitive by increasing the federal fuel-efficiency standard to 40 miles per gallon,” according to a new Civil Society Institute (CSI)/40MPG.org national opinion poll conducted by Opinion Research Corporation (ORC).

More than four out of five Michigan residents (84 percent) agree that “the U.S. auto industry is in major trouble and Michigan's economy will suffer seriously if the situation of the Big Three automakers gets even worse.” Those in Michigan households linked a “great deal/somewhat” to the health of the auto industry are even more likely (89 percent) to see the industry as being in serious trouble today. A slim 11 percent of all state residents think that “despite current problems in the U.S. auto industry, Michigan's economy is unlikely to suffer very much since the Big Three automakers have a good plan for moving ahead.”

Another key CSI/40MPG.org survey finding: More than four out of five Michigan residents (82 percent) agree that “we need higher federal fuel-efficiency standards for vehicles now in order to conserve more energy, making us less dependent on Middle Eastern oil, and to reduce the ill effects of global warming.” Over half of Michigan residents (51 percent) said that they agree strongly with that statement.

CSI President Pam Solo said: **“This survey should be a real wake-up call to Michigan’s state and federal lawmakers who may mistakenly think that state residents are somehow less likely than others in the U.S. to support higher fuel efficiency standards and other auto-related curbs on global warming. In fact, autoworkers in Michigan and other state residents are right on the same page as other Americans who know that a 40 mpg fuel-efficiency standard makes sense because the technology already exists, it is needed to strengthen our national security, and it is good for the environment.”**

ORC Senior Research Associate Graham Hueber said: **“The vast majority of Michigan residents – including auto industry workers and employees of non-auto companies that are linked to the fate of Detroit car makers – support a 40 mile per gallon federal fuel efficiency standard and are not content with industry and Congressional inaction on fuel-efficiency and global warming issues. For example, more than three out of four Michigan residents (78 percent) agree that ‘President Bush and Congress should increase the federal fuel-efficiency standard now to 40 miles per gallon.’ No meaningful variation of support was seen between Michigan autoworker households and those in the state without ties to the car industry. Even more telling is the fact that the level of support in Michigan for a 40 mpg fuel-efficiency standard is consistent with results for the same question in national surveys conducted by ORC for the Civil Society Institute and 40MPG.org.”**

According to the new survey, more than a third of Michigan households (31 percent) include one or more people who is directly or indirectly involved in the auto industry. About one in 10 (11 percent) are employed in the auto industry, 16 percent “have someone with a job in an industry or company that depends on the auto industry,” and 10 percent receive retirement, disability or other benefits from an automaker or related company. About seven in 10 Michigan residents (69 percent) say they do not fall into one of the preceding three categories. Nonetheless, nearly half of Michigan residents who said no one in their household works for/has worked for a company that depends on the auto industry (47 percent) say that their

household's economic well-being "depends on the general health of the Michigan auto industry." Just under a third (32 percent) of residents said that the economic prospects of their household are "not at all" dependent on the health of the auto industry.

OTHER KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

The ORC survey conducted for Civil Society Institute/40MPG.org is entitled, "Michigan Views About Fuel Efficiency and Global Warming." Other key survey findings include the following:

- Asked to identify the three biggest problems facing the U.S. auto industry today, more state residents (60 percent) pointed most often to "the industry not offering the best available technology, including improved fuel efficiency." The second most common response at 59 percent was an "over-emphasis on production of vehicles with poor fuel efficiency, like SUVs". (Auto industry workers in Michigan are not inclined to defend their employers; 60 percent of survey respondents in households with someone working in the auto industry cited Detroit's focus on SUVs and other fuel-inefficient vehicles as one of the biggest problems facing the industry.) The third and fourth most common responses were as follows: "poor U.S. auto industry vision and leadership" (53 percent); and "lack of Congressional or White House leadership in raising fuel-efficiency standards" (51 percent).
- Autoworker households in Michigan are a bit stronger (70 percent) than are all state residents (64 percent) in their support for Washington providing "incentives -- such as help to lower health care costs for autoworkers -- in exchange for increased investments by Detroit car makers in fuel-efficient technologies to reduce energy consumption and related global-warming pollution." Support for this proposition is lowest among Michigan Republicans (54 percent). The idea is supported by 59 percent of Independents and 75 percent of Democrats.
- Three out of five Michigan residents – including 57 percent of autoworker households – say that Japanese automakers now are "in the lead when it comes to hybrid technology and other more highly fuel-efficient technologies to reduce energy consumption and related global-warming pollution." Only 6 percent of state residents say that the U.S. is in the lead and under quarter (24 percent) say the U.S. and Japan are tied.
- More than nine out 10 Michigan residents (91 percent) "think Detroit car makers should be encouraged to make available here at home the more fuel-efficient cars they are currently only selling abroad." More than two out of three state residents (68 percent) responded "definitely yes" to this question.
- Four out of five Michigan residents – including 46 percent who feel strongly about it – agree that "greater fuel efficiency for cars, SUVs and trucks is in our national security interests." Only 6 percent of state residents strongly disagree with this statement.

For a full report on the ORC survey findings for CSI and 40MPG.org, go to <http://www.40MPG.org>.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a sample of 1,000 adults (500 men and 500 women) age 18 and over, living in private households, in the state of Michigan. Interviewing was completed during the period of February 15-18, 2007. Completed interviews of the 1,000 adults were weighted by three variables: age, gender and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total adult

population of the state of Michigan. The margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the full sample of 1,000 adults. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins.

ABOUT CSI AND 40MPG.ORG

The nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute (<http://www.CivilSocietyInstitute.org>) is a think tank that serves as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people, and between communities, government and business that can help to improve society. CSI has conducted more than 15 major surveys since 2003 on auto and energy issues, including vehicle fuel-efficiency standards, consumer demand for hybrids/other highly-fuel efficient vehicles, global warming and renewable energy. CSI is the parent organization of 40MPG.org (<http://www.40MPG.org>) and the Hybrid Owners of America (<http://www.HybridOwnersofAmerica.org>).

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EDITOR'S NOTE: A streaming audio recording of the news event will be available on the Web as of 6 p.m. ET on February 28, 2007 at <http://www.40MPG.org>.