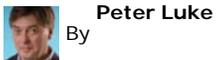




Local officials have dim view of Gov. Rick Snyder, Michigan Legislature

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By

Local officials grappling with six months of legislation that has overhauled their relationship with state government appear pretty skeptical about the direction Gov. Rick Snyder and a GOP-run Legislature is steering Michigan.



According to the **University of Michigan's spring survey** of county, municipal and township officials, half said the state is on the wrong track and just 32 percent said it's going in the right direction.

Even among local Republicans, 46 percent said the state is now on the right track while 39 percent said it's off on the wrong track. Three-fourths of Democrats said the state is going in the wrong direction.

However, 86 percent of respondents say their local units are headed in the right direction.

The poll, which received responses from 1,272 of Michigan's 1,856 local units of government, was conducted by the Center for Local, State and Urban Policy at the U-M's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.

While 52 percent of GOP officials believe Snyder is doing a good or excellent job, a pretty healthy 40 percent think his job performance is fair or poor. About 77 percent of Democratic officials think Snyder is doing a fair or poor job. About 61 percent of independents believe so.

Since he took office, Snyder has sought to remake how Lansing interacts with local units of government.

More than \$300 million in discretionary revenue sharing has been scrapped, for example, and replaced with \$200 million in incentive-based state aid local units will have to qualify for. A tough new emergency financial manager law, moreover, allows state-appointed managers to neuter the political authority of officials in communities under state receivership.

That fast pace has been made possible by replacing years of gridlock with big Republican majorities in the House and Senate. Only 21 percent of respondents believe the Legislature is doing a good or excellent job. About 73 percent rate it fair or poor. Among Republican local officials, just 30 percent give the Legislature positive marks. About 65 percent give lawmakers a fair or poor rating.

"This is such a period of large-scale change, I think it has people on edge," said Tom Ivacko, the center's administrator.

Snyder said today polling will reflect the fact that "reinvention" is taking place.

"Change is difficult for people, but overall the average Michigander is supporting what we're doing. I get that feedback everyday," he said. "These are difficult times. We're just going to continue to work hard to build great partnerships and be a good team."

At the beginning of this term, though, the perception of Snyder is still a lot better than it was of Gov. Jennifer Granholm at the end of her's. While 22 percent believe Snyder is doing a poor job. About 52 percent thought that of Granholm last year.

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