

The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy >> University of Michigan

Michigan Public
Policy Survey July 2020

Michigan local leaders expect mixed impacts from expanded voter registration and absentee voting reforms

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This report presents the experiences and opinions of Michigan's local government clerks and other city and township leaders regarding three statewide voting and election reforms: 1) voter registration up to 15 days before an election via mail, online, and at a Secretary of State's office; 2) in-person, same-day voter registration up to and including Election Day at a local clerk's office, and; 3) no-excuse absentee voting. These findings are based on statewide surveys of local government leaders in the Spring 2020 wave of the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS), conducted between March 30 and June 1, 2020.

>> The Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) is a census survey of all 1,856 general purpose local governments in Michigan conducted by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) at the University of Michigan in partnership with the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Townships Association, and Michigan Association of Counties. The MPPS investigates local officials' opinions and perspectives on a variety of important public policy issues. Respondents for the Spring 2020 wave of the MPPS include county administrators, board chairs, and clerks; city mayors, managers, and clerks; village presidents, managers, and clerks; and township supervisors, managers, and clerks from 1,342 jurisdictions across the state.

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Key Findings

- Looking at three specific voting and election reforms approved through Proposal 3 on Michigan's 2018 ballot, 60% of city and township officials say no-excuse absentee voting has had positive impacts on their administration of elections so far while 14% report negative impacts. In addition, 45% report positive impacts from allowing mail-in and online voter registration up to just 15 days before an election compared to 19% reporting negative impacts. However, 40% say that same-day voter registration up to and including election day at local clerks' offices has had negative impacts overall, versus 33% who report positive impacts.
- Looking ahead to the November 2020 general election, local officials are more likely to expect these reforms to cause problems for their jurisdiction compared with their experiences so far, particularly in large communities.
 - » In terms of no-excuse absentee voting, less than a quarter (23%) expect problems, though it should be noted that most completed the survey before Michigan's Secretary of State announced absentee ballot applications would be mailed to all registered voters for the August and November 2020 elections. Concern increases to 32% among the state's largest jurisdictions—those with more than 30,000 residents.
 - » When it comes to shifting the mail-in voter registration deadline from 30 days to 15 days before an election, only 27% predict this will be somewhat of a problem or a significant problem, although this includes 45% in larger jurisdictions.
 - » Local leaders' greatest concerns for November are with the impact of in-person same-day voter registration, for which a majority (55%) expect problems. In the largest jurisdictions this rises to 75%, yet even in the smallest jurisdictions, almost half (47%) of local officials predict problems with same-day registration in November.
- There are differences in concerns about the November 2020 election among city and township clerks (who are responsible for administering elections) compared to each other and to other city and township officials.
 - » City clerks are more concerned about the changes to voter registration deadlines compared to their township counterparts, while township clerks are more likely than city clerks to expect problems from no-excuse absentee voting.
 - » For both cities and townships, clerks are less likely to expect problems with no-excuse absentee voting compared to other local officials such as city mayors and administrators or township supervisors.
- Local officials are particularly concerned about staffing and workload issues regarding these reforms. However, they see benefits from increased ease of voting and voter turnout. They also expect both benefits and challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

In November 2018, Michigan voters passed Proposal 18-3 on the statewide ballot, the “Voting Policies in State Constitution Initiative.” It is commonly referred to as “Proposal 3.” This proposal amended the Michigan Constitution to:

1) protect the right of every Michigan voter to vote a secret ballot; 2) require that military service members abroad receive an absentee ballot at least 45 days before the election; 3) protect the right to vote a straight ticket on partisan ballots; 4) automatically register everyone to vote when getting a driver’s license or state identification card, unless the person declines; 5) allow Michigan voters to register to vote up to 15 days before an election by mail and up to and on Election Day in person; 6) allow all registered voters to vote absentee for any reason; and 7) allow for auditing of statewide elections to ensure their accuracy and integrity.¹

This initiative included a diverse set of reforms, some of which had greater support among local leaders than others prior to the 2018 election. For example, back in 2017, when the MPPS initially asked township and city officials about their support for a range of potential election administration reforms, 66% (including 74% of clerks) indicated *support* for no-excuse absentee voting, while 66% (including 76% of clerks) *opposed* allowing same-day voter registration.²

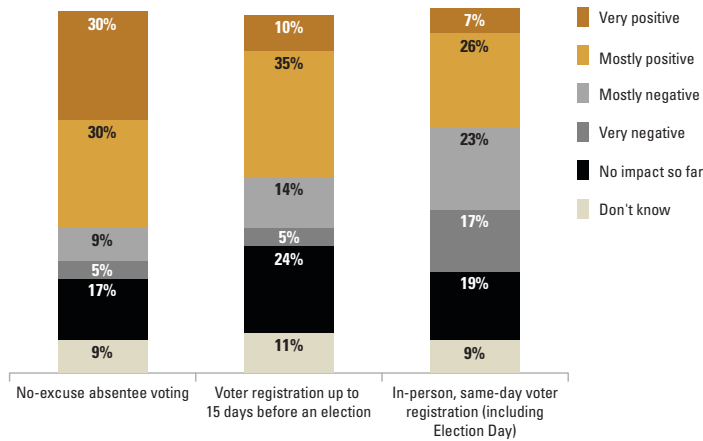
To get a sense of how some of these reforms are affecting elections at the local level across the state, the MPPS surveyed local leaders in spring 2020 from each of Michigan’s cities and townships—the local governments that administer elections in Michigan—with a series of questions regarding election administration in their jurisdictions. Because township and city clerks are the local officials who are in charge of the practical aspects of administering the elections, the MPPS also sent surveys to the clerks who are not typically included in the standard MPPS survey sample, to be able to compare local election administrators’ views with those of others such as township supervisors and managers or city mayors and administrators. In the following report, “statewide” data contain combined responses from both clerks and non-clerks, but then are also broken out by jurisdiction type and by the local officials’ position, in order to help identify any important differences of opinion.

As part of a larger battery of questions on election administration across the state, the Spring 2020 MPPS asked city and township officials about three specific reforms included in Proposal 3: allowing voter registration up to just 15 days before an election via mail, online, and at a Secretary of State’s office; in-person, same-day voter registration up to and including Election Day at the local clerk’s office; and no-excuse absentee voting. Local officials were first asked about the impacts—positive and negative—each of these reforms may have had on their jurisdiction’s administration of the elections to date, including the March 2020 primary and the May 2020 election (for jurisdictions that held them and completed the survey late in the field period). Then, the MPPS also asked about any problems officials expect these reforms could cause for the upcoming election in November 2020.



Impacts of Proposal 3 reforms on election administration so far

Figure 1
Local officials' assessments of the impacts so far of specific Proposal 3 reforms



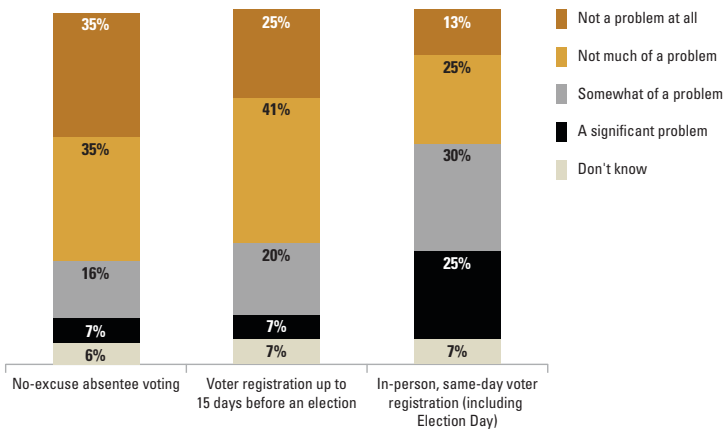
As shown in *Figure 1*, Michigan local officials report more positive than negative impacts so far on their jurisdiction's election administration from two of these three election reforms in the 2018 constitutional amendment. In particular, 60% of city and township officials statewide report mostly (30%) or very (30%) positive impacts from no-excuse absentee voting, while only 14% report mostly (9%) or very (5%) negative impacts. Only 17% have seen no impact at all so far from the new absentee voting reform (although relatively few jurisdictions conducted elections in May 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of those had already responded to the MPPS prior to that election).

When it comes to voter registration reforms, officials from almost half (45%) of Michigan's cities and townships report mostly (35%) or very (10%) positive impacts from the reform allowing voter registration up to just 15 days before an election via mail, online, and at a Secretary of State's office. Another 24% report no impact so far, while only 19% report mostly (14%) or very (5%) negative impacts.

By contrast, assessments of the impact to date of in-person same-day voter registration are more negative than positive. Overall, officials from 40% of Michigan's cities and townships report negative impacts from this reform, while 33% report positive impacts, and 19% have seen no impact so far. As noted earlier, in 2017 Michigan local officials, particularly clerks, expressed high levels of opposition to allowing same-day registration.

Michigan local officials expect more problems from Proposal 3 reforms in the November 2020 election than they have experienced so far

Figure 2
Local officials' expectations of whether specific Proposal 3 reforms will cause problems in the November 2020 general election



The MPPS also asked local officials to look ahead to how these three reforms may affect their administration of the November 2020 general election. For each of the reforms, local officials are more likely to predict problems in November 2020 beyond the negative impacts they report experiencing in previous elections.

Compared with the 14% reporting problems so far, about a quarter (23%) of city and township officials statewide predict no-excuse absentee voting will be somewhat of a problem or a significant problem during the November 2020 general election, while 70% expect few problems or no problems at all (see *Figure 2*). However, it is worth noting that most local officials completed the survey before the Michigan Secretary of State announced that absentee ballot applications would be mailed to all registered voters, and noting too that this new approach has prompted reports of increased concerns regarding the potential for an additional surge of absentee ballots in November.³

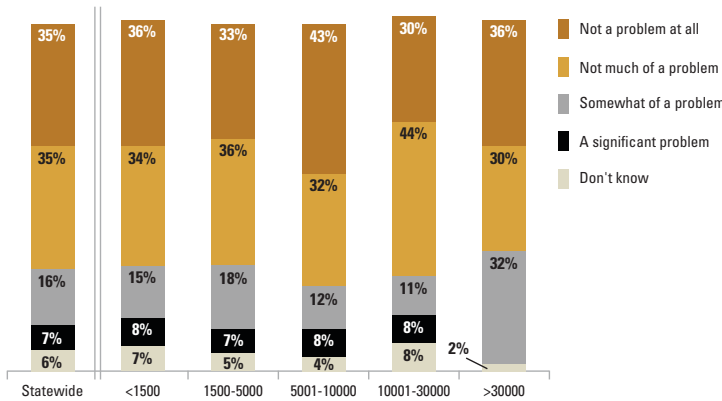
When it comes to voter registration, local officials generally do not expect many problems from shifting registration deadlines up to just 15 days before an election via mail, online, or at the Secretary of State's office. Only 27% predict this will be somewhat of a problem or a significant problem in November 2020 (up from 19% reporting problems so far), while 66% say it will not be much of a problem or a problem at all.

By contrast, a majority (55%) of local officials expect problems with in-person, same-day voter registration (up from 40% reporting problems so far). This compares to 41% of officials overall who predict few or no problems at all with it.



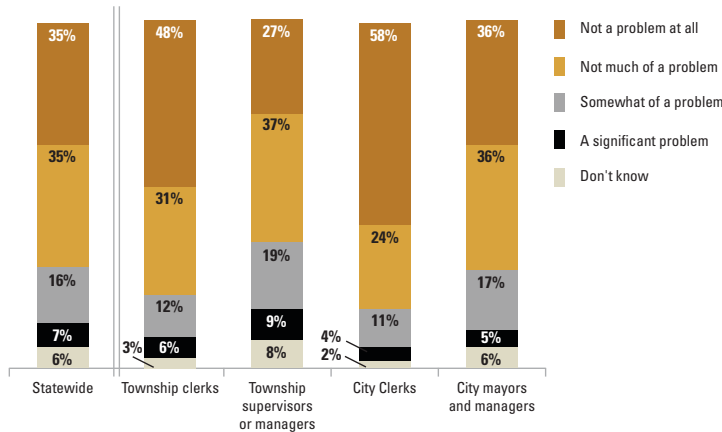
Relatively few expect problems with no-excuse absentee voting, regardless of community size or officials' position

Figure 3a
Local officials' expectations of whether no-excuse absentee voting will be a problem in the November 2020 election, by jurisdiction size



As noted above, throughout spring 2020 (during the COVID-19 outbreak, but prior to plans for the universal absentee ballot application mailing) about a quarter (23%) of local officials predicted no-excuse absentee voting will be somewhat of a problem (16%) or a significant problem (7%) in the November 2020 election (see *Figure 3a*). By contrast, 35% of city and township officials expect no-excuse absentee will not be a problem at all, and another 35% expect it will be not much of a problem. However, officials from jurisdictions with more than 30,000 residents are more likely than others to expect problems (32%), although none expect those problems to be significant.

Figure 3b
Local officials' expectations of whether no-excuse absentee voting will be a problem in the November 2020 election, by jurisdiction type and official's position



City and township clerks—the officials who administer elections in Michigan—are even less likely to predict problems with no-excuse absentee voting compared to other types of officials. Among city clerks, 58% expect no problems at all, as do 48% of township clerks (see *Figure 3b*). Just 15% of city clerks and 18% of township clerks expect no-excuse absentee voting to be somewhat of a problem or a significant problem in November 2020. However, township supervisors and managers (28%) and city mayors and managers (22%) are more likely to expect at least some problems, and significantly less likely to predict no problems at all.

Relatively few concerns about problems in November with voter registration up to 15 days before an election, regardless of community size or officials' position

Figure 4a
Local officials' expectations of whether voter registration up to 15 days before an election will be a problem in November 2020, by jurisdiction size

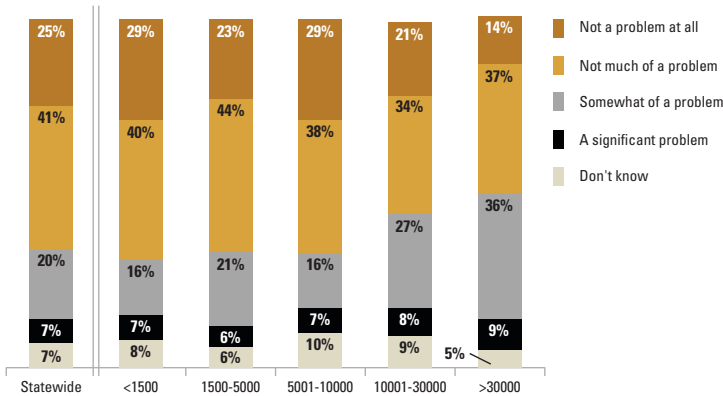
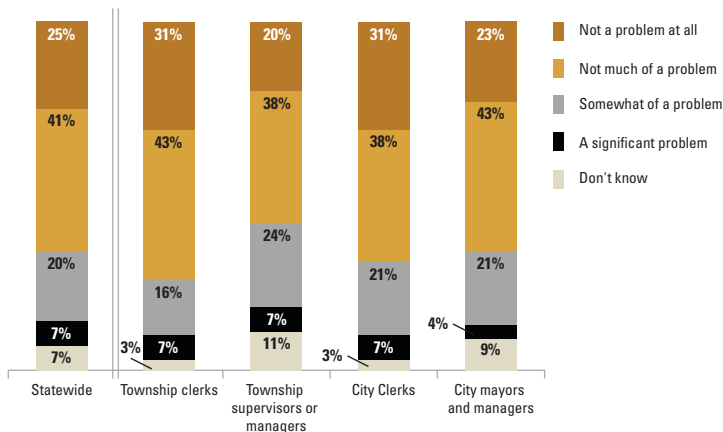


Figure 4b
Local officials' expectations of whether voter registration up to 15 days before an election will be a problem in November 2020, by jurisdiction type and official's position



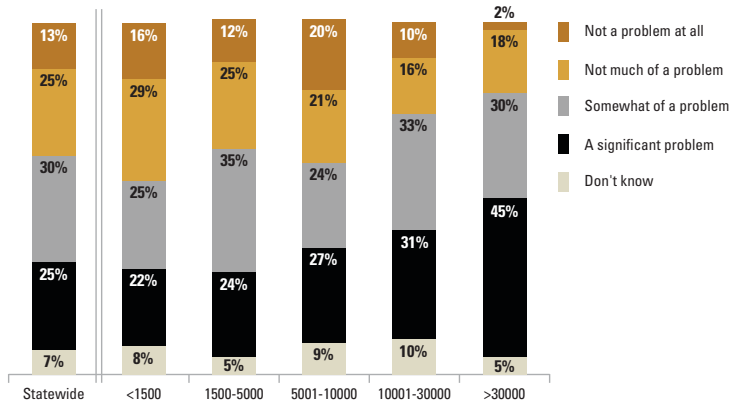
Again as noted above, while just 19% of Michigan local governments report experiencing negative impacts so far from shifting registration deadlines up to just 15 days before an election via mail, online, or in-person at the Secretary of State's office, 27% predict this reform will be somewhat of a problem (20%) or a significant problem (7%) in the November 2020 election (see *Figure 4a*). More problems are expected in larger jurisdictions, with 45% of officials from Michigan's largest jurisdictions predicting problems.

There are relatively few important differences between clerks and other officials in terms of their expectations about problems with the state's revised mail-in/online/Secretary of State office voter registration timelines up to 15 days before an election. The biggest difference is that 74% of township clerks expect few if any problems, compared to 58% of township supervisors and managers (see *Figure 4b*). In addition, and not surprisingly, in both townships and cities, those officials who are *not* clerks are more likely to say they "don't know" what to expect from this reform.



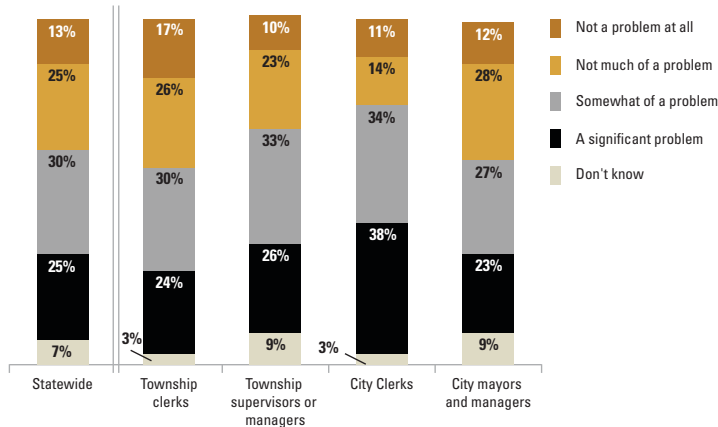
Majorities of officials of all types and from all sizes of communities predict problems with same-day voter registration in November

Figure 5a
Local officials' expectations of whether in-person, same-day voter registration at the local clerk's office will be a problem in the November 2020 election, by jurisdiction size



As described above, the third reform examined on the MPPS generates the greatest concerns. When asked about potential problems with in-person, same-day voter registration up to and including on Election Day, officials from over half (55%) of Michigan's cities and townships predict this reform will be somewhat of a problem (30%) or a significant problem (25%) for the November 2020 election (see *Figure 5a*). Concerns are particularly high in larger jurisdictions, including among officials from 75% of jurisdictions with more than 30,000 residents. In these largest cities and townships, 45% expect *significant* problems with same-day registration. Still, concerns about this reform are not limited to just large communities. Even among jurisdictions with fewer than 1,500 residents, nearly half (47%) of local officials expect problems in November 2020 due to in-person, same-day registration

Figure 5b
Local officials' expectations of whether in-person, same-day voter registration at the local clerk's office will be a problem in the November 2020 election, by jurisdiction type and official's position



Looking specifically among clerks, as shown in *Figure 5b*, almost three quarters (72%) of city clerks expect same-day registration will be somewhat of a problem (34%) or a significant problem (38%) in November. Fewer township clerks expect problems, with 54% predicting some (30%) or significant (24%) problems. Meanwhile, city mayors and managers are less likely (50%) than their clerks to expect problems with this reform in the upcoming general election, while township supervisors and managers are slightly more likely to say same-day registration will cause problems (59%).

Local officials concerned about added staffing and workload issues associated with reforms

The MPPS also asked local officials to describe in their own words the most significant positive and/or negative impacts from these reforms that they expect on their election administration of the upcoming November 2020 general election. Many officials describe a mixture of positive and negative impacts, with benefits to their citizens for voting access and increased voter turnout. However, they also see new challenges for their own administration of the election. In the words of one official:

“The positive impact is the number of individuals registering and voting on Election Day. The negative is the number of individuals registering and voting on Election Day and the extra staff that it takes.”

By far the most commonly mentioned concerns relate to election staffing and workload issues, especially in regards to same-day registration, but also for absentee ballots. Other concerns for same-day registration include a lack of internet access and issues with the Qualified Voter File (QVF), in addition to some concerns about potential fraud, and voter confusion. For no-excuse absentee voting, officials cite concerns about cost (e.g., postage, tabulators, etc.), their ability to handle an increased volume of absentee ballots, and some concerns about potential fraud and voter confusion. Local officials also pointed out benefits from no-excuse absentee voting, including shorter lines for those voting in-person, and increased turnout. Fewer officials discussed mail-in/online/Secretary of State registration up to 15 days before the election or did not expect significant effects when they did mention it. However, some officials cited concerns about registrations originating at Secretary of State offices being correctly communicated to the local clerks.

Voices Across Michigan

Quotes from local leaders describing the most significant positive and/or negative impacts from the three specific voting reforms that they expect in the November 2020 general election

“The most positive impact will be from no-excuse absentee voting. We may have many more (twice as many? three times?) absentee ballots to process than ever before, but we plan to add temporary help if necessary to send and receive the volume of ballots requested. In the current climate, this aspect of the election will be crucial. As far as Election Day processing, Absent Voter Counting Boards are far more efficient than in-person precincts for both voter secrecy and inspector training and costs. Personally, I would like to see Michigan go to all-mail elections, with a day prior to Election Day for ballot processing preparation (being allowed to open the ballots and ready them for tabulating the day before). The efforts we expend on hiring and training election inspectors are very great, and I believe that we will have a difficult time staffing all of our in-person locations this year, even though we only have six precincts. Most of our workers are elderly and would be at risk in a public situation if the pandemic extends or flares up again...”

“I think the reforms have been positive we have seen an increase in voter participation. The drawback is on our city clerk’s office who has to count the ballots the night of the election. Reforms to allow for absentee ballots to be counted as they come in or earlier than current guidelines would make our elections more efficient.”

“I feel Proposal 18-3 is a positive initiative for voters, enabling them more opportunities to vote. This is at the heart of why I became a clerk and the fundamentals of democracy. The administrative aspect of Proposal 18-3 is a negative aspect for our smaller community due to a lack of staffing and resources. For example, during the presidential primary election, we were running nonstop trying to keep up with the demand resulting from registration during the 14 days and those requesting absentee ballots. Working 18-hour days was not out of the ordinary. Smaller communities with smaller budgets don’t have the resources to add staff.”



Voices Across Michigan (continued)

Quotes from local leaders describing the most significant positive and/or negative impacts from the three specific voting reforms that they expect in the November 2020 general election

“...It is currently very hard to get anyone to run for township clerk, especially one who has skills enough to perform the statutory duties. Because it is not a full-time position and does not have benefits, we attract few people (the same issue we have with hiring people to work in the township). Combining that with the new requirements that clerks have to be available in their office for many more and longer periods causes some very good people to decide it isn’t worth their time. It would be great if for some of these required times we could leave a phone number on the office and agree to meet anyone who needs to register or get a ballot. (One recent election was a special election for a school district in which we had [REDACTED: a very small number of voters]. For the 16 hours the clerk was required to be present in an office we had no one wanting to register and no one wanting an absentee ballot.)”

“Prop 3 has significantly increased the amount of hours spent by the clerk to administer the elections, without any added compensation. This leads to frustration and resentment due to this added work not being recognized by the Board and residents of the township.”

“I see no problem with the voter registration up to 15 days before an election or no-excuse absentee voting. In fact, I think these two are a huge benefit to the voter. As far as the in-person, same-day voter registration on election day, that is a big problem for a Clerk’s Office the size of [REDACTED]’s. We only have two employees (the Clerk and Deputy Clerk) in the office with four precincts plus an absentee counting board. If we are pulled into one of those areas, it causes us to hire additional staffing just for same day voter registration at our counter. For the March 2020 Primary Election, we had lines at our counter in the late afternoon/early evening for that purpose. I can only imagine what the November 2020 Presidential Election will be like!”

“No-reason absentee voting has also caused a strain on our staff, but we are able to manage it with planning and preparation. It also takes the strain off of our election inspectors in the precincts on Election Day and places it on our full time clerk staff, who are generally more comfortable and better trained on election matters.”

“I would have said that our biggest concern would be in-person, same-day registration prior to this May election but now that our Permanent AV numbers have gone up over 2000 in the last two months, I’m concerned about no-excuse absentee voting. As it stands, I currently have almost 7000 Permanent Absentee Voters, which will make my Counting Board extremely busy in November, but I will also have to have the precincts open, which will mean less tabulators available in the Counting Board. I was fine for May because my tabulators weren’t needed in the precincts so I could use one tabulator for every precinct, but that won’t be the case for November.”

“No-excuse absentee creates more day-to-day work prior to the election, but has not been a hindrance on Election Day so far. The level for the November election may be challenging as processing the ballots in the precinct can be overwhelming. Same-day registration and voting did not cause issue in the last election and I had 5 voters that I would have normally turned away that were able to vote. The levels may increase for the November election - that is my only concern.”

“Same-day voter registration is a strain on the Township. From extremely long days for aged voting workers, to low internet speeds to load information, costs of new equipment and services, and the exhausting feat of finding extra workers for cover the added duties.”

“Because we are in a rural area. Our Township hall doesn’t have internet service/ a computer that works at the hall on election-- we use a hot spot to help us. Having to sign residents up on same day of elections, cause longer lines and wait times. I feel same-day election registration should not be allowed. People have plenty of opportunities to register before the actual Election Day.”

COVID-19's anticipated impact on election administration

The Spring 2020 MPPS was conducted between March 30 and June 1, during the initial progression of the COVID-19 pandemic in Michigan. When considering the impacts of the Proposal 3 reforms, some local officials discussed the effects of the pandemic on their election administration (about 10% of the approximately 850 comments from local leaders directly referenced COVID-19, social distancing, and related issues). This is particularly relevant to discussions about absentee ballots (both benefits and challenges associated with a potential for increased volume), but officials also expected impacts in other areas as well. For example, officials are concerned about the logistics of maintaining social distancing with in-person, same-day registration, and also about the impacts of COVID-19 on poll-worker recruitment, as many workers are older and therefore considered at higher-risk regarding the coronavirus. Additionally, some officials express concerns about the financial impact of COVID-19 on local governments and how that will affect their election-related budget. Other officials simply emphasize the uncertainty around COVID-19 and how it may affect election administration generally.

Voices Across Michigan

Quotes from local leaders describing significant positive and/or negative impacts from the three specific voting reforms that they expect in the November 2020 general election, referencing COVID-19

“As Clerk, I have thoroughly enjoyed the changes in all three areas. I think the most important impact would be the need for more staff to accommodate the same-day voter registration. We do not know the impact of COVID-19 as it relates to the November 2020 election.”

“Depending on COVID-19, there would be a negative impact if the Election was by Absentee ballots only. The Township Clerk would have to take care of all the Absentee Ballots herself, this would be a lot of work for one person. As with other small townships, the Township Clerk has a full time job besides for the Township Clerk.”

“In the era of COVID, the possibility of a greatly increased absentee turnout will be difficult with the current level of resources. Also, maintaining safety for staff/election workers with the need for visiting the office to register to vote isn't ideal.”

“I expect that the no reason absentee voting will take flight because of COVID-19 and have a significant impact on the Absentee boards who use tabulators to tally and my senior election inspectors (majority of workers) may retire because of the virus. I'm checking on Michigan Election law to find the deadline of combining precincts if all ballots are going to be counted in the boards.”

“No Reason Absentee is especially significant given the COVID outbreak. I have always been in support of this. I hope not to see many in person voters in August or November but same day registration could cause problems especially if social distancing is still to be followed (which I firmly believe it should still be in effect). We have a very small office area and traffic control is going to be a logistics challenge just for in-person voters so I hate to see same-day registrants adding to the mix.”

“The only issue I expect is in regards to the COVID-19 virus and its impact on in-person voting. My election workers do not want to work live polls because they are worried about being infected. I would like to see the state of Michigan take a proactive position and require all absentee voting for this election as well as for the August primary. I believe this is what the state is doing for the May election (our township doesn't have a May election). If done early and decisively, this would work well.”

“... I really like the no-excuse absentee voting, while it is a lot more work for the Clerk over the 45 days prior to elections, the burden it removes from the polls is worth it. Now that I have said that, I am a little concerned about the glut of AV requests that will be coming for August and November because of the COVID19 concerns.”

“It's really difficult to assess this at this point. The fact that this is a presidential election year, coupled with a world-wide pandemic, I could foresee increased hours due to elevated numbers in absentee voting and new/last minute registrations.”



Conclusion

The Constitutional reforms included in Michigan's 2018 Proposal 3 impacted election administration in cities and townships across the state. When considering the effects of three of these reforms in elections so far, Michigan local officials generally report positive impacts from allowing no-excuse absentee voting and from changing the mail-in/online/Secretary of State voter registration deadline up to just 15 days before the election. However, they are more likely to report negative than positive impacts from same-day voter registration at their local clerk's office, up to and including Election Day.

Looking ahead to the November 2020 election, local officials are more likely to expect these reforms to cause problems relative to their experiences so far in prior elections. In particular, 55% of local officials expect in-person, same-day voter registration to cause problems. Meanwhile only about a quarter (23%) of local officials expect no-excuse absentee voting to be somewhat of a problem or a significant problem in November, although most of these responses were gathered before the Secretary of State's office announced they would mail absentee ballot applications to all voters.

Township and city officials are particularly concerned about workload and staffing issues for the November 2020 election related to same-day registration and no-excuse absentee voting. However, they also expect benefits in increased voter turnout and improved ease of voting for their citizens. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, local officials see further benefits from no-excuse absentee voting given safety concerns about in-person voting, but some consider these benefits to be offset by large increases in absentee ballots that may result in other problems.

Notes

1. Michigan Secretary of State. (2018). Official Full Text for Proposal 18-3. Retrieved from https://www.michigan.gov/documents/sos/Full_Text_-_PTV_635256_7.pdf
2. Horner, D. & Ivacko, T. (2017). Local leaders' views on elections in Michigan: accuracy, problems, and reform options. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan. Retrieved from <http://closup.umich.edu/files/mpps-election-administration-2017.pdf>
3. Barrett, M. (2020, June 9). Michigan clerks prepare for the worst as coronavirus looms over 2020 elections. *MLIVE*. Retrieved from <https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2020/06/michigan-clerks-prepare-for-the-worst-as-coronavirus-looms-over-2020-elections.html>

Survey Background and Methodology

The MPPS is an ongoing survey program, interviewing the leaders of Michigan's 1,856 units of general purpose local government. Surveys are conducted each spring (and prior to 2018, were also conducted each fall). The program has covered a wide range of policy topics, and includes longitudinal tracking data on "core" fiscal, budgetary and operational policy questions and designed to build-up a multi-year time-series.

In the Spring 2020 iteration, surveys were sent by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) via the internet and hardcopy to top elected and appointed officials (including county administrators and board chairs; city mayors and managers; village presidents, clerks, and managers; and township supervisors, clerks, and managers) from all 83 counties, 280 cities, 253 villages, and 1,240 townships in the state of Michigan. In addition, an oversample of township and city clerks received just the battery of questions related to election administration, to ensure these officials had the opportunity to weigh in specifically on this topic.

The Spring 2020 wave was conducted from March 30 – June 1, 2020. A total of 1,342 jurisdictions in the Spring 2020 wave returned valid surveys (59 counties, 216 cities, 163 villages, and 904 townships), resulting in a 72% response rate by unit. A total of 896 clerks returned valid surveys (710 township clerks and 186 city clerks), resulting in a 59% response rate among clerks. The margin of error for the survey for the survey as a whole is +/- 1.41%. The key relationships discussed in the above report are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level or below, unless otherwise specified. Missing responses are not included in the tabulations, unless otherwise specified. Some report figures may not add to 100% due to rounding within response categories. Quantitative data are weighted to account for non-response. "Voices Across Michigan" verbatim responses, when included, may have been edited for clarity and brevity. Contact CLOSUP staff for more information.

Detailed tables of the data analyzed in this report broken down three ways—by jurisdiction type (county, city, township, or village); by population size of the respondent's community, and by the region of the respondent's jurisdiction—are available online at the MPPS homepage: <http://closup.umich.edu/mpps.php>.

The survey responses presented here are those of local Michigan officials, while further analysis represents the views of the authors. Neither necessarily reflects the views of the University of Michigan, or of other partners in the MPPS.



Previous MPPS reports

Local leaders' evaluations of Michigan's direction and Governor's performance during the COVID-19 pandemic's arrival (July 2020)

The initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Michigan communities and local governments (June 2020)

Energy policies and environmental leadership among Michigan's local governments (January 2020)

Mixed signals continue for Michigan local governments' fiscal health, while future outlooks worsen (December 2019)

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New Governor, new evaluations of the direction Michigan is headed among local leaders (August 2019)

Positive working relationships reported among Michigan's local elected officials (June 2019)

Community poverty and the struggle to make ends meet in Michigan, according to local government leaders (March 2019)

The state of community civic discourse, according to Michigan's local government leaders (December 2018)

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The **Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP)**, housed at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, conducts and supports applied policy research designed to inform state, local, and urban policy issues. Through integrated research, teaching, and outreach involving academic researchers, students, policymakers and practitioners, CLOSUP seeks to foster understanding of today's state and local policy problems, and to find effective solutions to those problems.

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