

Comparing Region 11 to Statewide Library Survey Results

Region 11 is an area in Southern Michigan covering Monroe to St. Joseph Counties and north to Eaton County, with an N=68 sample points represented in the statewide survey.

A 79% majority of all respondents in the statewide poll offered a positive rating for the job being done by local public libraries providing programs, services and a broad ranging quality collection of books and other materials for their library patrons. In Region 11, an identical 79% offered the same response.

A 91% majority of all respondents statewide said that “descriptions and depictions of slavery should never be banned.” In Region 11, 88% agreed.

A 91% majority of all respondents statewide said that “discussions about race” should never be banned. In Region 11, 88% of respondents agreed.

A 91% majority of all respondents statewide also said “criticisms of people and events in U.S. history” should never be banned. In Region 11, a 91% majority also agreed.

An 88% majority of all respondents statewide said “political ideas you disagree with” should never be banned. In Region 11, 85% agreed.

Opposition to book banning about “books with discussions about sex, gender identity or sexual orientation” was not as strong, but it was still opposed by two-thirds of Michigan voters. A 68% majority of all respondents statewide said that “books with discussions about sex, gender identity or sexual orientation” should never be banned, with 18% saying they should “sometimes be banned” and 11% saying they should “always be banned.” In Region 11, a 62% majority agreed that such books should never be banned, 20% said they sometimes should be banned, with 12% saying they should always be banned.

An 85% majority of statewide respondents oppose legislation (80% strongly), that would hold librarians criminally liable for what some people deem to be objectionable books or materials contained in library collections. In Region 11, an 80% majority offered the same opinion, including 71% who strongly oppose such legislation.

A 66% majority of statewide respondents say that the boards that govern the operation of local public libraries should be non-partisan, with 27% saying it doesn’t really matter if library boards are aligned with partisan political parties. In Region 11, 71% said governing boards should be non-partisan with 21% saying it doesn’t matter.

When asked where respondents say children and teenagers are able to get materials that are objectionable, 57% of statewide respondents said on the internet, with 25% saying from social media. In Region 11, 52% said on the internet, with 34% saying on social media.

An 85% majority of all respondents statewide said they agree more with the statement that said, “individual parents can set rules for their own children, but they do not have the right to decide for other parents what books are available to their children.” Only 13% agreed with the statement that “parents have a right NOT to have their children exposed to objectionable books at the library and should be able to join with other parents to have those books removed from the library.” In Region 11, 88% agreed that a few parents should not be able to decide for all parents and everyone else.

An 82% majority of all respondents statewide agreed with a statement saying that “we need to protect the ability of young people to have access to books from which they can learn about and understand different perspectives and help them grow into adults who can think for themselves.” Only 15% agreed with the statement that “we need to protect young people from books that they might find upsetting or that reflect ideologies and lifestyles that are outside of the mainstream.” In Region 11, 83% of respondents agreed with the first statement, with 13% agreeing with the second.

A 77% majority of all respondents statewide agreed the most with the statement that “books that contain sexual content or discuss issues like gender identity and sexual orientation are tools for understanding complex issues, and young people should have access to them, but at an age-appropriate level.” Another 21% said they agreed more with the statement that “books that contain sexual content or discuss issues like gender identity and sexual orientation should NOT be in local public libraries where young people can access them against their parents’ wishes.” In Region 11, 74% agreed more with the first statement, while 22% agreed more with the second.

A 73% majority of all respondents statewide said, “book banning is un-American, infringes on our freedoms, and harms our democracy.” Another 24% said they most agree with the statement that says “books that are anti-American, anti-police, or hostile to basic family values do not belong on the shelves of our local public libraries. In Region 11, 71% said book banning is un-American, with 29% saying that books critical of American ways should be removed.

If elected officials supported legislation that would allow or require books to be banned from your local public library, a 63% majority of all respondents statewide said they would be less likely to vote for that person (46% much less likely), 28% said it would not influence them one way or the other, with only 5% saying they would be more likely to vote for that person. In Region 11, a 63% majority also said they would be less likely to vote for an elected official who supports book banning (43% much less likely), with 3% saying they would be more likely to vote for that person.

A 75% majority of all respondents statewide said librarians are very capable (45%) or mostly capable (30%) of deciding which books and reading materials should be included in library collections. In Region 11, a 71% majority said librarians are very capable (44%) or mostly capable (27%) in deciding which books to keep or ban.

A 50% bare majority of all respondents statewide said that there is “absolutely no time when a book should be banned from local public libraries,” with another 39% saying, “there are rare times when it may be appropriate to ban books from public libraries,” and only 8% saying “there are many inappropriate books that should be banned from local public libraries.” In Region 11, a 49% plurality said there is no time when books should be banned, 41% said there are rare times, with 4% saying there are many inappropriate books that should be removed.

Statewide, 42% of all respondents said they use programs or services a few times a month or more often, while in Region 11, a 38% plurality offered the same response.

In other survey results, a 50% bare majority of all statewide respondents said Michigan is “headed in the right direction,” 31% said things have “pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track,” with 19% “undecided.” In Region 11, a 40% plurality said Michigan is headed in the right direction with 34% saying it was pretty seriously off on the wrong track.

Statewide, a 78% solid majority said IMLS federal funding for libraries should remain in the federal budget. In Region 11, 81% offered the same opinion.

Statewide, an 82% majority said it is important (40% critically important), for state government to replace federal library funding if it is no longer part of the federal budget. In Region 11, 79% offered the same opinion (37% critically important).

A 54% to 38% majority of all respondents statewide said they had an unfavorable opinion of Donald Trump, while a 61% to 36% majority gave Trump a negative job rating as President. In Region 11, a 46% plurality had a favorable opinion of Trump with 42% having an unfavorable

opinion of him. A 49% plurality offered a negative job rating for Trump with 47% offering a positive job rating.

A 59% to 33% majority of respondents statewide had a favorable opinion of Gretchen Whitmer, with a 56% to 42% majority offering a positive job rating for her. In Region 11, a 49% to 41% plurality had a favorable opinion of her, and a 50% to 44% majority offered a negative job rating for Whitmer.

Statewide, 41% of respondents said they do not recognize Dana Nessel, 25% said they have a favorable opinion of Nessel, 17% have an unfavorable opinion, with 17% undecided. In Region 11, 49% said they do not recognize Nessel, 17% have a favorable opinion of her, 19% have an unfavorable opinion of her, with 15% undecided.

A 38% to 30% plurality of respondents statewide had an unfavorable opinion of State Legislative Republicans, while a 40% to 32% plurality had a favorable opinion of State legislative Democrats. In Region 11, a 35% to 22% plurality had a favorable opinion of State Legislative Republicans, while a 32% to 28% plurality had an unfavorable opinion of State Legislative Democrats.

Finally, a 41% to 21% plurality of respondents statewide had a favorable opinion of community activist groups in general, with 33% undecided. In Region 11, a 32% plurality of respondents had a favorable opinion of Community Activist Groups, with 21% having an unfavorable opinion of them.

Statewide, 10% said they consider themselves part of the LGBTQ community. In Region 11, 6% offered the same response.

Statewide, 44% of all respondents identified as Democrats, 38% as Republicans, with 15% Independents or other parties. In Region 11, 35% of respondents identified as Democrats, 45% as Republicans, with 15% Independents or other parties.