



MEDIA RELEASE

Poll on education tax clearer than political outcome of the election

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, September 26, 2011 – Winnipeg, Manitoba – Supporters of all political parties in the Manitoba election support removing education tax from the property tax bill, says a new poll conducted by the Manitoba Real Estate Association (MREA) and CJOB/68.

In fact, more voters agree education taxes should be removed from the property tax bill than can agree on which party or leader should win, the poll shows.

"It's pretty clear that if we agree on anything, we agree on this issue – education tax on property is an unfair way to support a core service like education," says MREA CEO Brian Collie. The poll asked Manitobans four questions related to education tax and the response to each one clearly showed that Manitobans want their political leaders - whoever wins - to reform property tax and find a more equitable way to fund education, Collie says.

When faced with this statement:

- I believe that education taxes should not be included on my property tax bill, but instead should be paid for through other means. – **60 per cent agreed.**
- Paying for education through property taxes is not fair because many homeowners carry a lot of debt, are elderly or on a fixed income. – **61 per cent agreed.**
- Manitobans who own cottages should be able to vote in municipal elections in that community because they pay taxes there. – **68 per cent agreed.**
- All Manitobans should pay education taxes based on their income, not on the value of their property. – **66 per cent agreed.**

By comparison, the same poll showed that 41 per cent of decided voters will choose the NDP, while 32 per cent will cast a ballot for the Progressive Conservatives. The Liberals have five per cent of the support. The poll of 579 Manitobans was conducted by Viewpoints Research and is accurate within four percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The poll was conducted from Sept 14th to 21st.

"We've seen polling on other key issues during this election and nothing comes close to getting two-thirds of voters' support, not Sunday shopping, not concerns about health care and not which side of the lake the BiPole should go down – east or west," says Collie.

MREA surveys over the years have shown that Manitobans remain steadfast on this issue, Collie says. "This confirms what real estate agents have suspected for a long time, Manitobans no longer want the value of their property to determine if they can afford school taxes. Our retired seniors in particular find it a burden. For them and for REALTORS® this is a quality of life issue," says Collie.

MREA has been one of the leaders of the Manitoba Education Financing Coalition. The Coalition, a group of 40 organizations representing 250,000 Manitobans, support the letsplayfair.com campaign. In calling on the Province of Manitoba to reduce its reliance on property tax to fund education, the coalition recommends that education be supported through the province's general revenues, that way Manitobans can all pay a fair share to support the education of the next generation.

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