

### **Poll: Michiganders Pessimistic About Racial Equality**

Despite a landslide victory last year in Michigan, President Barack **OBAMA**'s election has not substantially changed the views of racial discrimination here.

That's according to a new survey by the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion conducted by Mitchell Research & Communications. The poll found that an increasing number of Michigan residents -- black and white -- seem to be questioning whether racial equality is possible within 100 years or ever.



"The incessant and sometimes racially tinged attacks on President Obama, often in the context of political gamesmanship, may be discouraging many African-Americans and some whites about the opportunity to continue making progress on race relations in America," said Tom **COSTELLO**, president and CEO of Michigan Roundtable. "I hope we have not lost an opportunity to bring this country together."

The survey also showed continued significant divides between white and African American populations regarding the prevalence of racism and equal opportunity in education and employment, with whites tending to believe people of color have the same opportunities, while African-Americans say there is much work to do to bring about equality in Michigan.

This was a phone survey of voters statewide in late September and early October, examining attitudes about racial, gender and sexual preference discrimination. The poll of 650 persons included an oversample of African-Americans, necessary to obtain a statistically reliable sample. Most of the questions were identical to a 2008 survey Mitchell conducted for the Roundtable.

Both surveys asked, "When do you think we will achieve racial equality?" Respondents were offered the answers: We have it now, in my lifetime, in 100 years or never. The 2009 survey showed 56 percent of Michigan residents interviewed said we will have racial equality in 100 years or never, up from 48 percent in 2008. Only 16 percent of those surveyed said we have racial equality today, and 24 percent said equality would come in my lifetime.

The discouragement seemed to have been most profound in the African-American community, whereas 68 percent said it would 100 years or never, up from 63 percent in 2008. Within the African-American community in the 2009 survey, 40 percent saying we would never achieve racial equality -- up from 29 percent in 2008.

There was less change over time, with 50 percent expressing pessimism by saying racial equality would happen within 100 years or never, compared to 47 percent last year. Among whites, 46 percent of those surveyed this year had the more optimistic view that we have racial equality now or will in my lifetime, up from 44 percent in 2008.

"It is clear that our state is deeply divided by race," Costello said. "That should not be a surprise, given that government and its institutions have and continue to play an important role in dividing where people live and, increasingly, work. We are the most racially segregated state in the nation."

The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion is a nonprofit human relations organization that seeks to eliminate discrimination and racism by working across racial, religious, ethnic and cultural boundaries.

### **Race equity survey noted in the media**

["Survey: Racial equality still not a reality"](#)

["Survey reveals race relations pessimism"](#)

### **Racial equity survey analysis**

[2009 Tracking Poll of General Election Voters](#)

[Michigan State Wide Race Relations Survey](#)