Michigan Protest Vote Strong

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DETROIT, May 17—Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace built his sweeping victory in Michigan's presidential primary on a strong protest vote joined in by as many as 250,000 Republicans.

Twenty per cent of those who supported Wallace in Tuesday's election identified themselves as "core Republicans" who were breaking a lifelong GOP voting habit to support the Southern governor.

Fully 28 per cent of the Wallace voters named President Nixon as their second choice for the presidency; 22 per cent named Sen. George McGovern of South Dakota; 8 per cent named Sen. Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota.

These and other statistics came from a voter survey made for The Detroit News by Market Opinion Research at a cross-section of 40 polling places throughout Michigan Tuesday with a scientifically selected sample of 573 voters.

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The error factor in a poll of this size is plus or minus 4 per cent but in this case the survey was aimed at discovering. Why people voted as they did and the error factor is considered less crucial.

Gov. Wallace's call to voters to "Send Them a Message"—to tell the nation's leadership it was time for a change—found a receptive audience in the Michigan primary, the survey showed.

More than one-third, or 35 per cent of Wallace's vote came from those, both Democrats and Republicans, who staunchly oppose busing.

About 17 per cent of his support came from those uneasy about the nation's well being, about "the way things are going"—a frequent comment encountered by the survey interviews.

The strong mood of protest carried into every aspect of the election in Livonia, for example, voters turned down a tax proposal and four separate charter changes while giving Wallace 65 per cent of the vote.

"They came to protest," said Livonia Mayor Edward H. McNamara, "and when votes are in that kind of mood, they vote 'No.'"

The Market Opinion Research' survey discovered that the single most important issue cited by voters in both the Democratic and Republican primaries was Vietnam.

On the GOP side of the ballot, 36 per cent of the Republican voters gave Vietnam as their reason for supporing Mr. Nixon. Twenty-eight per cent of all Democratic voters cited Vietnam as the key issue.

In the survey Gov. Wallace's greatest strength was shown to be his stand against busing, a stand that by itself accounted for 35 per cent of his support. But, the governor's voters also named a number of other reasons for backing him, including "the way things are going," plus crime, Vietnam, taxes and inflation.

McGovern, on the other hand, emerged in the survey as a single-issue candidate. His television ads, speechess and leaflets focused heavily on his early, strong opposition to U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia.

About 55 per cent of those who voted for McGovern told the interviewers that his stand against the war was the single most important factor in their vote.

One surprise disclosed by the poll was that McGovern, widely recognized as the "youth candidate" because of his support from young people, ran second to Wallace among younger voters.

New voters, those between 18 and 24, preferred Wallace over McGovern by 41 per cent to 37 percent. Sen. Humphrey, who finished third in the primary, won only 8 per cent of the youth vote.

Gov. Wallace, the poll showed, outdrew his Democratic opponents in every age group, particularly in the over-40 segment. He won half of those in the 40-59 age group while McGovern was pulling less than 25 per cent and Humphrey about 15 per cent.

Gov. Wallace's great strength came in the suburbs of Detroit—in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties outside Detroit—where he pulled 45 per cent of his total statewide vote of more than 800,000.

But Gov. Wallace's popularity stretched far beyond the limits of the metropolitan Detroit area as he carried 78 of Michigan's 83 counties—losing only four to McGovern, including Washtenaw County (home of the University of Michigan) and Ingham County (home of Michigan State University).

Gov. Wallace, who would have won the Michigan primary even without the boost he received from the Republican crossovers, had his victory margin swelled to 51 per cent by normally GOP voters who marked a Democratic ballot.