

Marquette University Law School Poll: Finds Trump approval rating at 41 percent in Wisconsin

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 22, 2017

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Please note: Complete poll results and methodology information can be found online at law.marquette.edu/poll.

MILWAUKEE – A new Marquette Law School Poll finds that President Donald Trump receives a 41 percent approval rating among registered voters in Wisconsin, while 47 percent disapprove and 11 percent say they don't know whether they approve or not.

Among Republicans, 86 percent approve, 7 percent disapprove and 6 percent lack an opinion. Among Democrats, 5 percent approve, 89 percent disapprove and 6 percent are without an opinion. Thirty-eight percent of independents approve of how Trump is handling his job while 44 percent disapprove and 16 percent have not formed an opinion.

Trump receives his strongest support in the Milwaukee media market, excluding the city of Milwaukee, with 48 percent approval and 42 percent disapproval, followed by

the Green Bay media market where 46 percent approve and 45 percent disapprove. In the media markets covering the north and western parts of the state, approval is at 45 percent and disapproval at 43 percent. Respondents in the Madison media market report 32 percent approval and 55 percent disapproval. The city of Milwaukee shows the lowest approval, 19 percent, with 63 percent disapproval.

This is the first Marquette Law School Poll of 2017, and the first time the poll has measured Trump's job approval. While job approval can only be measured once an official is in office, favorability toward candidates can be measured at any time by asking whether respondents have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the candidate. This question allows comparison before and after an election. Trump's favorability rating has improved since his election as president.

In the new poll, conducted from March 13 to 16, 42 percent view him favorably and 48 percent unfavorably. That compares to 33 percent favorable and 62 percent unfavorable ratings in the Marquette Law School Poll conducted Oct. 26-31, 2016. Favorability increased sharply among Republicans, 67 percent of whom had a favorable impression of Trump in October compared to 90 percent in the current poll. In October, 27 percent of Republicans had an unfavorable view, with 7 percent doing so now. Among independents, 33 percent had a favorable view and 60 percent an unfavorable one in October, compared to 39 percent with a favorable view and 45 percent with an unfavorable view in the March

survey. Democratic opinion has not shifted, with 4 percent favorable and 94 percent unfavorable in October and 5 percent favorable and 91 percent unfavorable now.

Thirty-three percent of respondents say Trump shows good judgment while 62 percent say he does not. In October, 26 percent said he showed good judgment with 71 percent saying he didn't. Republicans shifted from 54 percent saying that Trump showed good judgment in October to 70 percent in the current poll. In October, 44 percent of Republicans said he did not show good judgment while 26 percent of Republicans say that now. Shifts among independents are more modest, from 26 percent saying Trump showed good judgment in October to 29 percent now. In October, 71 percent said he did not show good judgment, compared to 65 percent in March. Only four percent of Democrats in October said he showed good judgment and five percent say so now, with 95 percent in October and 92 percent in March saying Trump lacks good judgment.

Forty percent of registered voters say the phrase "cares about people like me"

describes Trump while 55 percent say it does not describe him. In the October poll, 35 percent said that this describes Trump, with 62 percent saying it did not describe him. As with other opinions of Trump, Republicans show considerable increases, from 71 percent saying Trump cares in October to 81 percent in March, and declines, from 28 percent to 14 percent of Republicans saying he does not care. Independents shifted less, from 35 percent (in October) to 39 percent (now) saying Trump cares, and from 61 percent to 56 percent saying he doesn't care. Democrats barely changed, with 6 percent saying Trump cares in October and 5 percent saying so in March and with 93 percent saying he did not care in October and 91 percent saying so now.

Russian effort to influence 2016 election

In the poll, taken before public congressional hearings on March 20, voters split evenly on whether they were concerned that the Russian government may have attempted to influence the 2016 election. Thirty percent say they are very concerned about this, 20 percent are somewhat concerned, 18 percent are not too concerned and 30 percent are not at all concerned. Partisan divisions are sharp on this question, with 83 percent of Republicans not at all or not too concerned while 85 percent of Democrats are very or somewhat concerned. Forty-seven percent of independents are very or somewhat concerned while 50 percent of independents are not at all or not too concerned about the issue.

Health care law

Asked what they would like to see Congress do about the 2010 health care reform law, 6 percent favor keeping the law as it is, 54 percent would keep and improve it, 28 percent favor repealing and replacing the law and 8 percent would repeal and not replace the law.

Sixty-one percent of Republicans favor repeal and replace, with 13 percent favoring repeal and not replace. Twenty-four percent of Republicans would keep the law but improve it and less than a half-percent would keep the law as it is. Sixty percent of independents would keep the law and improve it, with 4 percent saying they would keep it as it is. Twenty-three percent of independents would repeal and replace the law, and 9 percent would repeal it and not replace it. Seventy-five percent of Democrats would keep and improve the law, and 15 percent would keep it as it is, while 4 percent would repeal and replace it and 3 percent would simply repeal it.

Opinion of the 2010 health reform law varies depending on whether it is described as “the Affordable Care Act” or as “Obamacare.” A random half of the sample was asked “As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010, often called the Affordable Care Act. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?” while the other random half of the sample was asked, “As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010, often called Obamacare. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?”

When it was described as “the Affordable Care Act,” 51 percent said they have a favorable view of the law while 40 percent have an unfavorable view and 9 percent said they don’t know. When the law was described as “Obamacare,” 40 percent reported a favorable view, with 53 percent unfavorable and 6 percent lacking an opinion.

Sex of the respondent affects both overall opinion of the health law and the effect of what it is called. Among men overall, 35 percent have a favorable and 59 percent an unfavorable view of the law. Among men, when the law was described as the “Affordable Care Act,” 40 percent are favorable to it and 50 percent are unfavorable, but when described as “Obamacare,” 31 percent are favorable and 66 percent are unfavorable. In contrast, among women overall, 55 percent have a favorable view of the law, with 35 percent unfavorable. When it is described as the “Affordable Care Act,” women are 58 percent favorable and 32 percent unfavorable. When it is labeled “Obamacare,” women are 51 percent favorable and 38 percent unfavorable.

Education also plays a role in the effect of how the law is labeled. Among those without a college degree, 52 percent are favorable and 36 percent unfavorable when the law is called the “Affordable Care Act,” a split that reverses when it is called “Obamacare” to 36 percent favorable and 56 percent unfavorable. Among those with a college degree, 47 percent are favorable and 49 percent unfavorable toward the “Affordable Care Act,” and 50 percent are favorable to 45 percent unfavorable toward “Obamacare.”

While details of a replacement for the 2010 health care reform law are currently being debated, 49 percent of respondents think a replacement law will decrease the number of people who have health insurance, 25 percent think the number of insured will not change and 18 percent think a replacement law will increase the

number of insured people.

Forty-five percent think a health care replacement bill will increase the cost of health insurance, 21 percent think the cost will not change and 28 percent think costs will decrease under a replacement bill.

Immigration policy

Sixty-six percent of respondents say undocumented immigrants who are currently working in the United States should be allowed to stay and eventually apply for citizenship. Seventeen percent say these immigrants should be able to stay as guest workers but not apply for citizenship and 14 percent say they should be required to leave the U.S. In October, 62 percent supported eventual citizenship, 19 percent favored a guest worker status and 16 percent thought undocumented immigrants should be required to leave the country.

Asked about the administration's steps to accelerate the deportation of people in the country illegally, including those who may not have committed a serious crime, 43 percent support deportations while 50 percent do not. Support for deportations is 85 percent among those who think undocumented immigrants should be required to leave the country, 60 percent among those favoring a guest worker program and 30 percent among those who think there should be a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

Asked about building a wall along the entire border with Mexico, 37 percent support constructing a wall while 59 percent oppose doing so. Among those who approve of the job Trump is doing as president, 75 percent support the wall while 20 percent oppose it. Among those disapproving of Trump's handling of his job, 8 percent support the wall and 91 percent oppose it. Opinion follows party lines as well, with 74 percent of Republicans, 7 percent of Democrats and 34 percent of independents favoring the wall, while 23 percent of Republicans, 90 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of independents oppose it.

Supreme Court appointments

To assess how people view appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court, respondents were asked if they would be willing for their senator to vote for a nominee "who was highly qualified but with whom you

disagree on a number of policies” or “would you want your senator to vote against any nominee you disagree with no matter how well-qualified.” Sixty-two percent of respondents say they would be willing for the senator to vote for a highly qualified candidate with whom they disagreed while 27 percent said they would want the senator to vote against such a candidate.

In February 2016, following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia but before the nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to succeed him, 57 percent of registered voters said they would want their senator to support a highly qualified nominee despite their disagreements and 30 percent would want the senator to vote against the candidate. While the overall positions on the question have changed only slightly, the partisan structure of opinion has changed. In February 2016, 34 percent of Republicans said their senator should vote for a well-qualified nominee while 50 percent said the senator should vote against. In March 2017, 63 percent of Republicans say they would be willing for their senator to vote for the well-qualified candidate they disagree with, and 32 percent say they would not.

Democrats also shifted in a little over a year, from 70 percent saying their senator should vote for a well-qualified candidate and 19 percent saying they should not, to 57 percent support for a well-qualified candidate and 28 percent preferring their senator to vote against such a candidate.

Independents show relatively little change over this time. Sixty-two percent in 2016 and 66 percent in 2017 say they are willing for their senator to support a well-qualified candidate they disagree with, and 26 percent in 2016 and 21 percent in 2017 say they would be unwilling.

State issues and conditions

Voters are evenly divided on the direction of the state, with 49 percent saying Wisconsin is headed in the right direction and 47 percent saying it is off on the wrong track. When last asked in August 2016, 45 percent said right direction and 51 percent said the wrong track.

Ten percent of registered voters say the state is adding jobs faster than most other states, 39 percent say about the same as other states and 39 percent say Wisconsin is lagging behind most other states, while 11 percent say they don't know. When last asked in November 2015, 57 percent said the state was lagging behind, 31 percent about the same and 6 percent said Wisconsin was creating jobs

faster than other states, with 6 percent saying they didn't know.

Twenty-nine percent of respondents say the state budget is in better shape than a few years ago, 28 percent say it is about the same and 33 percent say it is in worse shape, with 9 percent saying they don't know. When asked in April 2015, during the last consideration of a state budget, perceptions were similar, with 33 percent saying the budget was better, 25 percent saying about the same and 38 percent saying it was in worse shape, while 4 percent didn't know. The outlook was more positive in January 2014 when this question was first asked. At that time 49 percent said the budget was in better shape, 26 percent said it was the same and 20 percent said it was in worse shape.

Voters were reminded that the state borrowed more than \$1.5 billion to pay for transportation and road building over the last two state budgets. Asked how the state should pay for transportation, 35 percent would increase taxes and fees, 3 percent would continue to borrow, 9 percent would reduce construction and maintenance and 44 percent would take money from others areas of the budget. Respondents were not asked which areas they would reduce in order to fund transportation.

Respondents were split on whether to reduce University of Wisconsin tuition by five percent for all in-state students (48 percent support) or to use the equivalent amount of money to increase scholarships for low and middle-income students who qualify (45 percent support). Those with household incomes under \$40,000 prefer increased financial aid by a 55 percent to 36 percent majority, while those with household incomes over \$75,000 prefer a 5 percent across the board tuition reduction by 54 percent to 44 percent. Those in between, earning \$40,000 to \$75,000, prefer tuition reductions by 50 percent to 43 percent.

Seventy-nine percent say they support requiring able-bodied parents of school-age children to meet minimum work or job training requirements as a condition of receiving state welfare benefits. Seventeen percent oppose such a requirement.

Eighty percent support increasing state aid to K-12 schools in the state, with 17 percent opposed.

Twenty-five percent say they are very satisfied with the public schools in their community, 49 percent are satisfied, 14 percent are dissatisfied and 6 percent are very dissatisfied. Those results are little changed from April 2015 when the question

was last asked. At that time 25 percent were very satisfied, 50 percent satisfied, 16 percent dissatisfied and 5 percent very dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with public schools is lowest in the city of Milwaukee, where 7 percent say they are very satisfied, 40 percent satisfied, 36 percent dissatisfied and 11 percent very dissatisfied. That is little changed from previous waves of the poll.

In the rest of the Milwaukee media market, 23 percent are very satisfied, 49 percent satisfied, 15 percent dissatisfied and 7 percent very dissatisfied. In the Madison media market, 29 percent are very satisfied, 48 percent satisfied, 14 percent dissatisfied and 4 percent very dissatisfied. Thirty-one percent of respondents in the Green Bay media market say they are very satisfied with their public schools, with 52 percent satisfied, 5 percent dissatisfied and 5 percent very dissatisfied. In the northern and western parts of the state, 29 percent are very satisfied, 50 percent satisfied, 10 percent dissatisfied and 3 percent very dissatisfied with their public schools.

Whose facts do you trust?

Respondents were asked, “would you be more likely to believe the facts presented by newspaper and television media or would you be more likely to believe the facts presented by elected politicians?” Fifty-seven percent say they would believe the media, 22 percent would believe politicians and 18 percent say they would believe neither.

Evaluation of Wisconsin officials

Gov. Scott Walker receives a 45 percent approval and 48 percent disapproval rating in this poll. In October 2016, his approval rating was 42 percent with 51 percent disapproving.

Voters give similar approval ratings to Republicans and Democrats in the state legislature. Thirty-eight percent approve of the job Republican legislators are doing while 49 percent disapprove and 13 percent say they don’t know. When last asked in November 2015, 31 percent approved and 60 percent disapproved, with 9 percent saying they didn’t know. For Democratic legislators, 36 percent approve and 49 percent disapprove with 14 percent lacking an opinion. In November 2015, 39 percent approved, 49 percent disapproved and 12 percent had no opinion.

Sen. Ron Johnson is viewed favorably by 39 percent of respondents with 34 percent holding an unfavorable view of him. Twenty-six percent say they didn't know enough to have an opinion or they didn't know. In October, 41 percent had a favorable view, 38 percent were unfavorable and 21 percent lacked an opinion.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin is viewed favorably by 40 percent and unfavorably by 35 percent, with 24 percent lacking an opinion. In October, Baldwin was seen favorably by 37 percent and unfavorably by 37 percent, with 26 percent not giving an opinion.

Speaker Paul Ryan holds a 45 percent favorable to 38 percent unfavorable rating, with 17 percent unable to rate him. In October, 47 percent were favorable, 36 percent unfavorable and 17 percent gave no opinion.

About the Marquette Law School Poll

The Marquette Law School Poll is the most extensive statewide polling project in Wisconsin history. This poll interviewed 800 registered Wisconsin voters by landline or cell phone, March 13-16, 2017. The margin of error is +/-4.4 percentage points for the full sample.

The partisan makeup of the sample, including those who lean to a party, is 43 percent Republican, 48 percent Democratic and 8 percent independent. The long-term estimate over the previous 41 statewide Marquette polls, with 36,152 respondents, is 43 percent Republican and 48 percent Democratic, with 9 percent independent. The partisan makeup of this sample, excluding those who lean to a party, is 27 percent Republican, 29 percent Democratic and 42 percent independent, compared to the long-term estimate of 27 percent Republican, 31 percent Democratic and 41 percent independent.

The entire questionnaire, methodology statement, full results and breakdowns by demographic groups are available at law.marquette.edu/poll.