

Marquette University Law School Poll: Finds little change in views of Trump as Mueller probe ends

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Opinions shift on confidence in Mueller; on state issues, majorities support legal marijuana, higher special education spending, oppose increase in gas tax

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

MLWAUKEE — Following the announcement that the federal investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller has concluded, a new Marquette University Law School Poll finds a range of reactions to what is known of those conclusions, as well as modest changes in evaluations of President Donald Trump.

Forty-six percent of registered voters in Wisconsin approve of the job Trump is doing as president, while 52 percent disapprove. In January, 44 percent approved and 52 percent disapproved.

Support for reelecting the president is also little changed since January — 28 percent say that they would definitely vote to reelect Trump, and 14 percent would probably vote to reelect him. Another 8 percent say that they would probably vote for someone else, and 46 percent would definitely vote for someone else. In January, 27 percent said that they would definitely vote to reelect Trump, 12 percent said that they would probably vote for him, 8 percent that they would probably vote for someone else and 49 percent that would definitely vote for someone else.

Based on what respondents have heard about Mueller's report so far, 42 percent say they have a great deal of confidence that the investigation was fair and impartial, 25 percent say they have some confidence, 10 percent have only a little confidence and 14 percent say they have no confidence at all in the fairness of the investigation. When the question was last asked in early October 2018, 31 percent said they had a great deal of confidence in the fairness of the investigation, 19 percent had some confidence, 13 percent had only a little confidence and 26 percent said they had no confidence at all.

Confidence in the Mueller investigation rose among Republicans and independents, while it declined among Democrats. Among Republicans, the percentage expressing a great deal of confidence rose from 12 percent in October to 43 percent in April, while those having no confidence at all declined from 38 percent in October to 19 percent in April. Among independents, the proportion of those who said they had a great deal of confidence increased from 29 percent in October to 41 percent in April. Independents with no confidence in the investigation declined from 25 percent to 14 percent. Among Democrats, those expressing a great deal of confidence declined from 58 percent in October to 45 percent in April, but those Democrats with no confidence also declined from 13 percent to 8 percent, as more Democrats picked the "some confidence" or "only a little confidence" options.

While the full Mueller report had not been released at the time of the April poll, respondents express a range of conclusions based on what they have heard about the report.

A majority, 60 percent, think that Russia interfered with the 2016 presidential election, while 32 percent think Russia did not interfere.

Thirty-five percent think the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 election, while a majority, 53 percent, think the campaign did not collude.

Opinion is evenly divided on whether Trump tried to obstruct the investigation, with 45 percent saying he did and 45 percent saying he did not.

While 39 percent say the investigation clears Trump of any wrongdoing, 54 percent say they believe questions still exist concerning the president's behavior.

Support for beginning hearings on impeachment stands at 29 percent, down from 33 percent in January. Those saying that there is not enough cause for impeachment hearings rose to 65 percent in April from 59 percent in January.

Those who say "honest" describes President Trump rose to 35 percent in this April poll from 31 percent in January. Fifty-nine percent in the new poll say "honest" does not describe him, compared to 62 percent in January.

The poll was conducted April 3-7, 2019. The sample included 800 registered voters in Wisconsin interviewed by cell phone or landline, with a margin of error of +/- 4 percentage points. Eight questions were asked of one half of the sample and seven were asked of the other half. Questions on Form A have a sample size of 404 and a margin of error of +/- 5.7 percentage points. Questions on Form B have a sample size of 396 and a margin of error of +/- 5.7 percentage points. The half-sample items are listed at the end of this release. The Democratic presidential candidate preference items were asked of Democrats and independents who do not lean to the Republican party. That sample size is 411 with a margin of error of +/-5.6 percentage points.

Democratic presidential candidates

Among 12 current or potential Democratic presidential candidates, Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden are top choices among Democrats or independents who do not lean to the Republican party, with Sanders a top choice of 32 percent and Biden a top choice of 29 percent.

Elizabeth Warren is a top choice of 17 percent. In January, Sanders was a top choice of 23 percent, Biden a top choice of 32 percent and Warren a top choice of 15 percent.

Support for all 12 candidates included in the survey is shown in Table 1. Respondents were asked for each candidate if that person would be a top choice, an acceptable choice, someone they would not support, or if they haven't heard enough about the candidate yet.

Table 1: Support for Democratic candidates, in order of "a top choice"

	A top choice	An acceptable choice	Would not support	Haven't heard enough
Sanders	32	39	20	7
Biden	29	43	19	6
Warren	17	35	18	28
Harris	11	27	13	45
O'Rourke	10	27	14	45
Booker	9	29	12	46
Klobuchar	8	26	12	50
Buttigieg	7	18	8	63
Castro	4	18	11	63
Inlee	2	11	8	72
Gillibrand	2	11	16	57
Hickenlooper	1	15	10	67

The January poll asked about eight of these candidates. Those results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: January support for Democratic candidates, in order of "a top choice"

	A top choice	An acceptable choice	Would not support	Haven't heard enough
Biden	32	44	16	7
Sanders	23	38	28	9
Warren	15	36	17	30
O'Rourke	12	21	8	56
Booker	8	24	8	56
Harris	8	23	11	54
Klobuchar	5	20	8	62
Castro	4	16	10	65

Opinion of the governor and legislature

After three months in office, Gov. Tony Evers' job approval stands at 47 percent, with disapproval at 37 percent. Fifteen percent say they don't have an opinion. In January, 39 percent approved, 22 percent disapproved and 38 percent lacked an opinion.

Fifty percent say they approve of the job the Wisconsin legislature is doing, while 38 percent say they disapprove and 11 percent say they do not know. In January, 52 percent approved, 31 percent disapproved and 16 percent lacked an opinion.

Asked about cooperation between the governor and legislative leaders, 48 percent say Evers is trying to cooperate with legislative leaders, while 37 percent say he really isn't interested in cooperating. Twenty-five percent say legislative leaders are trying to cooperate with Evers, while 57 percent say they are not really interested in cooperating. In January, 47 percent said Evers was trying to cooperate and 25 percent said he was not, while 22 percent said legislative leaders were trying to cooperate and 46 percent said they were not interested in cooperating.

State issues

Fifty-nine percent of voters say marijuana use should be legal, while 36 percent say it should not be legal. A substantial majority, 83 percent, say use of marijuana for medical purposes with a doctor's prescription should be legal, with 12 percent saying it should not be.

Seventy-four percent support a major increase in state aid for special education, while 19 percent oppose such an increase.

Forty-one percent support a freeze on the number of students in voucher schools and a suspension of new independent charter schools, while 46 percent are opposed.

Seventy percent say the state should accept federal funds to expand Medicaid coverage, while 23 percent oppose the expansion.

More respondents prefer to keep gas taxes and registration fees at the current level (57 percent) than support increasing the gas tax and fees in order to increase spending on roads and highways (39 percent).

Support for an increase in the minimum wage stands at 57 percent, with 38 percent opposing an increase.

Opinion has recently fluctuated concerning Foxconn. Forty-one percent say the state subsidies to Foxconn will be worth the cost, while 47 percent think the project will cost more than it is worth. When asked in late-October 2018, 41 percent said support of the project would be worth it and 40 percent said it would not be worth the cost. In an early-October 2018 poll, 38 percent said it would be worth the cost and 48 percent said it would not be worth it.

Criminal justice issues

Forty-nine percent support raising the age at which defendants are considered adults in criminal cases from 17 to 18, while 45 percent oppose increasing the age.

Seventy-one percent favor eliminating mandatory minimum sentences, giving judges the ability to set sentences on a case-by-case basis, while 20 percent oppose eliminating mandatory minimum sentences.

Sixty-five percent support allowing offenders to petition judges to expunge or clear their record after their sentences are completed in cases of nonviolent, lower-level offenses. Twenty-six percent oppose this proposal.

Fifty-five percent agree that after serving two-thirds of a sentence, a prisoner should be released from prison to less costly supervision if the prisoner can demonstrate he or she is no longer a threat to society. Thirty-five percent oppose such early release from prison.

Expanding job training for prisoners is supported by 88 percent and opposed by 9 percent.

Increased use of treatment programs and of alternatives to jail for offenders with drug or alcohol issues is supported by 78 percent and opposed by 16 percent.

Increased state spending for prosecutors and public defenders is supported by 50 percent, with 37 percent opposing a spending increase.

State of the state

Fifty-two percent of respondents say the state is headed in the right direction, while 40 percent say it is off on the wrong track. In January, 57 percent said the state was going in the right direction and 33 percent said it was on the wrong track.

Table 3 presents the favorability ratings of elected officials in Wisconsin and the percentage of respondents who haven't heard enough or say they don't know.

Table 3: Favorability ratings of elected officials

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know
Tony Evers	46	35	12	5
Donald Trump	45	51	1	2
Tammy Baldwin	44	43	10	3
Ron Johnson	40	32	24	5
Scott Fitzgerald	22	22	46	10
Robin Vos	14	21	56	10

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, April 3-7, 2019. The margin of error is +/-4 percentage points for the full sample.

The Democratic presidential candidate preference items were asked of Democrats and independents who do not lean to the Republican party. That sample size is 411 with a margin of error of +/-5.6 percentage points.

Eight issue questions were asked of half the sample (Form A) and seven were asked of the other half-sample (Form B). Questions on Form A have a sample size of 404 and a margin of error of +/- 5.7 percentage points. Questions on Form B have a sample size of 396 and a margin of error of +/- 5.7 percentage points.

Form A questions covered legalization of marijuana, Medicaid expansion, opinion of Foxconn, minimum wage increase, increasing funding for special education, increasing spending for prosecutors and public defenders, increasing gas taxes, and a freeze on vouchers. Form B items covered medical marijuana, early release from prison, mandatory minimum sentences, expungement of criminal records, treatment alternatives for those with drug and alcohol issues, expanding job training for prisoners, and raising the age to charge juveniles as adults.

The partisan makeup of the sample, including those who lean to a party, is 45 percent Republican, 44 percent Democratic and 10 percent independent. The partisan makeup of the current sample, excluding those who lean to a party, is 30 percent Republican, 29 percent Democratic and 40 percent independent.

Since January 2017, the long-term partisan balance, including those who lean to a party, in the Marquette poll has been 45 percent Republican and 45 percent Democratic, with 9 percent independent. Partisanship excluding those who lean to a party has been 30 percent Republican and 29 percent Democratic, with 40 percent independent.

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