

DC Wrap: Pollster Goldstein says few undecided left in presidential race

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Welcome to our weekly DC Wrap, where we write about Wisconsin's congressional delegation. Sign up here to receive the newsletter directly: <https://forms.gle/YLYZtjWHPSt24HhZ7>

Quotes of the week

“Don’t let the President’s hysterical tweets distract you from the fact that he is refusing to provide COVID relief to American families & businesses unless he gets re-elected.”

– U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Madison, in a tweet about Trump’s constant Twitter use.

“Obviously it was a surprise, but I guess in today’s society it’s never a surprise when anyone gets the COVID.”

– U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, in a FOX 6 Milwaukee interview on President Trump’s COVID-19 diagnosis.

This week’s news

— Pollster and political scientist Ken Goldstein says Joe Biden’s steady lead over President Trump in Marquette University Law School polls over the last five months is “stunning” given the number of potentially game-changing events that have transpired.

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But when comparing Marquette Poll Director Charles Franklin's findings to nationwide polling averages, Goldstein said Biden's lead is "not surprising."

"I think this is a race that — if not fully baked, if not already been baked for months — is getting pretty baked," Goldstein said. "You have a very low number of undecideds, and you have two candidates who people know well. And we're getting a very stable race even, as you say, there's so much going on nationally and so much going on in Wisconsin."

Goldstein is a professor of political science at the University of San Francisco, a role he previously held at UW-Madison where he co-founded and co-directed the Big Ten Battleground Poll. He told the DC Wrap Interview Series the 8 percent of undecided voters in Wisconsin highlighted in Wednesday's Marquette poll posed far less of a threat to Biden than they did to Hillary Clinton four years ago.

"I think everyone's so scarred from 2016 that we're all a little bit afraid to say what's different about this year," he said. "And what's different is Hillary Clinton was under water in terms of her favorability nationally, under water in the state of Wisconsin."

"You have many fewer people this time around who dislike both Trump and Biden, and Biden's actually net favorable."

See the interview:

— Biden's edge on Trump was largely unchanged among likely Wisconsin voters in the latest Marquette University Law School Poll.

Forty-six percent of likely voters backed Biden, while 41 percent favored Trump. Libertarian Jo Jorgensen was at 4 percent, while 8 percent said they were undecided or planned to vote for someone else.

Biden had a 4-point edge in the last poll at 47-43 with Jorgensen at 4 percent.

The survey released Wednesday went into the field the day after the first presidential debate, while about half of the interviews were conducted after the president announced he was positive for COVID-19.

Poll Director Charles Franklin noted a series of events in recent months have failed

to swing the race either way. Biden's edge has been between 4 and 6 points since early May.

"This is just a function of people being very, very dug in on their choices," Franklin said.

Biden's favorability rating was one of the few numbers related to the presidential race to show movement in recent months.

Biden's favorability rating was minus-19 in February before starting to rebound. It was minus-11 in March before dropping to single digits. This month was the first time Biden had a net-positive rating with 48 percent having a favorable view of him and 45 percent an unfavorable one.

In other presidential numbers:

*44 percent of registered voters approve of the job Trump is doing, while 52 percent disapprove. It is the third straight month Trump's job approval number has been 44 percent.

*41 percent approved of Trump's handling of the coronavirus, while 56 percent disapproved. That number was unchanged from last month.

*37 percent approved of the way Trump has handled the protests sparked by the deaths of Black men at the hands of police, while 54 percent disapproved. It was 36-54 last month.

*The economy continues to be Trump's strong point with 51 percent approving, compared to 45 percent disapproving. Last month it was 52-44.

See more from the poll [here](#).

— The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll also finds Biden leading Trump among likely voters in Wisconsin.

The poll found 50 percent back Biden, while 44 percent supported Trump. That's largely unchanged from a 48-43 edge for Biden three weeks ago.

The poll, conducted Sept. 29 through Oct. 5 and released Oct. 5, found 50 percent believe Biden would be better at handling the coronavirus pandemic, while 41 percent said Trump would be better.

Also, 51 percent said Trump would be better at managing the economy, while 44 percent said Biden.

Fifty-seven percent said the winner of the November election should be able to appoint a replacement for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, while 13 percent of those surveyed had already voted in the presidential election.

See more on the [results](#).

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson has been traveling between Washington and Appleton by private jet since the coronavirus pandemic struck, a Johnson spokesman tells WisPolitics.com.

Johnson's method of travel to and from the nation's capital in recent weeks has come under scrutiny in the wake of the Oshkosh Republican's positive COVID-19 test over the weekend. That test came on the heels of Johnson quarantining for 14 days after being exposed to the virus by his chief of staff. He returned to Washington last week and was again exposed to someone who had the virus.

Johnson on Monday told a Colorado talk radio station he would travel to Washington "in a moon suit" to confirm Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court if he was still sick with the virus when the vote was held. That prompted a Politico reporter to tweet he had been tracking Johnson's flights from Appleton to Washington "for months."

Spokesman Ben Voelkel confirmed the tweet was accurate, telling WisPolitics.com Johnson "has been flying to Washington in a private plane for safety and logistical reasons during the pandemic."

"The senator pays for flights out of his own pocket," Voelkel said in an email before noting prior to the pandemic, Johnson traveled on commercial flights throughout his time in the Senate.

See more [here](#).

See Johnson's most recent Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Account [report](#), starting on page 1283.

See the more from the KHOW interview [here](#).

— The fight over the deadline for absentee ballots in the fall election is headed back to federal court after Wisconsin's conservative justices ruled GOP lawmakers have the authority to challenge a ruling that pushed it back six days.

In a 4-3 decision, the conservative majority ruled Wisconsin statute “unmistakably grants the Legislature an interest in defending the validity of state law when challenged in court.”

Writing for the majority, Justice Brian Hagedorn said defending state law is normally “within the province and power of the Attorney General.” Still, the lame-duck laws Republicans approved in 2018 give lawmakers the power to defend the validity of state law so long as certain prerequisites are met.

The ruling is a win for Republicans who have asked a federal court to overturn a ruling that extended the deadline for absentee ballots in the fall election. Along with extending the deadline for absentee ballots, federal Judge William Conley also pushed back the final day for Wisconsinites to register to vote online or by mail, along with other changes.

Justice Rebecca Dallet led the court's three-member liberal wing in its dissent, arguing the Legislature “lacks the statutory authority to usurp the executive's exclusive power to represent Wisconsin's interests.”

Dallet added the conservative majority's decision “creates out of whole cloth authority for the legislature to act as the attorney general.” That decision, Dallet wrote, “raises significant issues of constitutional separation of powers.”

Gillian Drummond, a spokeswoman for Attorney General Josh Kaul, argued the majority opinion was limited in its application to the extraordinary session laws.

“The court acknowledged that its decision was not based on a ‘wide-ranging, constitutional inquiry,’” she said. “There are many applications of the litigation

control provisions in Act 369 that are plainly unconstitutional.”

Read the [decision](#).

See more [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind has a 78 percent chance of beating challenger Derrick Van Orden, according to a House forecast recently released by FiveThirtyEight.

The 3rd CD is the only Wisconsin race the polling and analysis publication isn't placing squarely in its "Solid" category in favor of the incumbent.

FiveThirtyEight's forecasted vote share predicts the La Crosse Dem will defeat Van Orden by seven points. That margin would represent Kind's closest race in a decade.

See the forecast [here](#).

— Van Orden's campaign says he raised more than \$1 million in the third quarter.

The campaign didn't release other details of his fundraising during the three-month period, including cash on hand.

Wisconsin candidates for federal office filed pre-primary reports ahead of the Aug. 18 primary. That report showed Van Orden raised \$168,017 over the first three weeks of July. He had \$288,338 in the bank on July 22.

See more [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, is set to report he raised more than \$625,000 during the third quarter of 2020, his campaign says.

That sum leaves him with \$1.29 million in the bank ahead of the November election.

Third-quarter finance reports for the period covering July through September are due Oct. 15.

A spokesman for Roger Polack, Steil's opponent, told WisPolitics.com earlier this week his campaign is still finalizing its finance report but "we exceeded our goal."

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson was one of 10 Republicans who voted against a stopgap spending measure that overwhelmingly cleared the Senate.

The bill was approved 84-10 just hours before the deadline to avoid a government shutdown.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, supported the measure, which keeps the government funded through Dec. 11.

See the roll [call](#).

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, announced he helped secure a grant of nearly \$1 million to expand telehealth services in Northeast Wisconsin.

See the [release](#).

— U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Brookfield, in a statement disagreed with the view that there needs to be a wholesale rewrite of our country's antitrust laws.

See the [release](#).

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, voted for America's Conservation

Enhancement Act to protect wildlife and their habitats and conserve the natural areas important to Wisconsin's sportsmen and women.

See the [release](#).

Posts of the week

Given the outbreak in the Senate, I was tested on Friday and I am pleased to report that my result was negative. I again urge everyone to wear a mask and practice social distancing to protect the health and safety of yourself and others. [#MaskUpWisconsin pic.twitter.com/S0Bd5iY94c](#)

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [October 3, 2020](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CFvcNi2nBzD/>

Eight of us were sitting in chairs, one of us was driving a tractor! I was happy to speak with [@VoiceofMilk](#) today about what Congress should do to make sure [#Wisconsin](#)'s world-famous dairy industry continues to thrive. [pic.twitter.com/H1563Bek6p](#)

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [October 7, 2020](#)

Your voice matters - make sure to respond to the 2020 Census today if you haven't already! The 2020 Census questionnaire is quick, easy, and confidential. Click here to get started: <https://t.co/hW3Nfj6Npf>

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) [October 7, 2020](#)

[https://www.instagram.com/p/CGA_8X-H_z-/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CGA_8X-H_z/)

ICYMI

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[Western Wisconsin veterans say Derrick Van Orden's book speaks to larger gender issues in military](#)

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[Tom Tiffany one of 17 Republicans to vote against resolution condemning QAnon](#)

[Rep. Bryan Steil Says Defeating Coronavirus, Getting Wisconsinites Back To Work Are Top Priorities](#)

[Wisconsin politicians react to president's COVID-19 results](#)