

# Evers, Trump handling of COVID-19 slips in new MU poll, but two-thirds still back gov efforts

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Voters' views of how Gov. Tony Evers and President Trump are handling COVID-19 have slipped over the last month, according to the latest Marquette University Law School Poll.

Still, nearly two-thirds of voters back Evers' response to the pandemic, while the president is now underwater on his approach.

The poll found 64 percent of registered voters surveyed approve of how Evers has handled the coronavirus, while 32 percent disapprove. That's down from a 76-17 split in late March.

The last poll went into the field just as the gov's first stay-at-home order took effect. The latest survey, conducted last week, comes after the administration extended the order through May 26 and GOP legislative leaders went to the state Supreme Court to overturn the directive.

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In this month's survey, 69 percent said it was appropriate to close schools and businesses, as well as restricting public gatherings, while 26 percent said it was an overreaction. In March, that split was 86-10.

Poll Director Charles Franklin said polarization is driving that shift. Last month, 75 percent of Republicans supported the restrictions. Now, they're evenly divided. Meanwhile, 90 percent of Dems in this month's poll backed the moves. Also, 35 percent of Republicans now approve of how Evers is handling the pandemic, compared to 63 percent in late March.

While voters are less supportive of Trump's handling of COVID-19 compared to a month ago, it's had little impact on his overall job approval rating or the presidential race.

Now, 44 percent of voters approve of Trump's handling of the outbreak, compared to 51 percent who disapprove. That's down from 51-46 in March.

Reaction to the president's handling of COVID-19 also varies sharply among partisans with 81 percent of Republicans approving and 89 percent of Dems disapproving.

Still, Trump's overall job approval split is 47-49 compared to March, when it was 48-49.

There's also been little change in views of how the president has handled the economy even as the state's unemployment rate skyrockets. Fifty-four percent approve of his handling of the economy, compared to 40 percent who disapprove. It was 54-41 in late March.

The presidential race continued to be tight with 46 percent of voters backing presumptive Dem nominee Joe Biden and 43 percent supporting Trump. That's largely unchanged from 48-45 in late March

The telephone poll of 811 registered voters was conducted May 3-7 with two-thirds of the interviews via cell phones and the rest over landlines. The margin of error was plus or minus 4 percentage points, and the partisan makeup of the sample matched the survey's long-term trend.