

WILL: Polls reopened Wisconsin

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Respondents support safety measures, largely unmoved by messages

The News: The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) conducted [a statewide poll](#) of Wisconsin voters to better understand their response to Wisconsin's newly reopened economy in the wake of a Supreme Court decision terminating the 'Safer at Home' order. The poll included broad questions on policy and comfort levels with various activities, as well as a message test experiment to determine if certain messages move respondents.

The Poll: WILL collected 556 responses from likely Wisconsin voters from May 16th through 19th using respondents provided by Dynata. Based on turnout in the 2016 presidential election in Wisconsin, this gives us a margin of error on our topline findings of 4%.

Majorities continue to support public measures intended to stop the spread of COVID-19

- 68% agree that masks should be required in public.
- 57% disagree with religious exceptions to stay-at-home orders.
- 58% say the goal of coronavirus policy is to 'flatten the curve'; 30% said the goal is to eliminate the virus.

A message test to examine the extent to which new information could make people more comfortable with reopening the state found limited success in moving voters.

- Support for reinstating coronavirus-related restrictions drops from 51% agreement in the control group to 38% agreement when respondents are exposed to messages about lockdowns and deaths of despair.
- Messages related to the constitutionality of lockdowns, the length of time it may take the economy to recover, and scientific evidence on the lack of proof that stay-at-home orders have been effective failed to shift opinions.

Comfort with reopened Wisconsin falls along party lines in some cases.

- Significantly higher percentages of Republicans are likely to visit restaurants than Democrats or independents.
- Less partisan division exists on willingness to shop at local stores.

Achieving public health metrics can improve comfort with reopening

- Among those who thought Wisconsin's reopening occurred too fast, majorities support a phased reopening, as well as testing and contact tracing at recommended levels.
- 48% indicate a willingness to return to a stay-at-home order in event of second wave of COVID-19.

School closings increase support for Education Savings Accounts

- Support for Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) in Wisconsin hits 58% when respondents are told that parents are incurring costs as a result of schools moving online. 55% support ESAs when told that the cost is largely incurred by low-income parents.

The Quote: Research Director Will Flanders said, "These new poll results indicate that despite a reopened Wisconsin, many remain cautious and concerned about COVID-19. Encouraging practical safeguards and meeting public health benchmarks will make Wisconsin's transition smoother and more widely accepted."

Read More:

- "[Memo: Messaging Reopening Wisconsin](#)," June 2020
- "[Message of 'deaths of despair' leads to support for reopening of economy](#)," Washington Examiner, June 3, 2020