

Marquette University: MU Law School Poll finds state incumbents lagging in approval, favorability one year before 2022 elections

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MILWAUKEE – A new Marquette Law School Poll survey of Wisconsin registered voters finds that incumbents of both parties face a challenging political environment one year before the 2022 election, with a greater number of unfavorable than favorable views of all seven political figures included in the survey. Among registered voters, 40% say they would vote to reelect Gov. Tony Evers, while 53% would vote for someone else and 6% say they don't know or decline to say. For Sen. Ron Johnson, 38% say they would vote to reelect him, 52% would vote for someone else, and 10% say they don't know or decline to answer.

Evers' job approval stands at 45%, while 46% disapprove. When last measured in August 2021, 50% approved and 43% disapproved.

Evers is viewed favorably by 42% and unfavorably by 45%, with 13% saying they don't know enough about him or don't have an opinion. For Johnson, 36% have a favorable opinion, 42% have an unfavorable opinion, and 22% say they don't know enough or don't have an opinion. In August, Evers was seen favorably by 46% and unfavorably by 42%, while Johnson was viewed favorably by 35% and unfavorably by 42%.

Both Evers and Johnson have spoken frequently about the coronavirus pandemic. Fifty-three percent say they trust Evers as a source of information about the virus either a great deal or a fair amount, while 45% say they trust him not much or not at all. Thirty-nine percent trust Johnson a great deal or a fair amount for coronavirus

information, while 54% say they trust him not much or not at all.

Approval of Evers' handling of the pandemic is 53%, with 40% disapproval. In August, 54% approved and 39% disapproved.

President Joe Biden's job approval rating has declined to 43%, with 53% saying they disapprove and 4% say they don't know. His job approval is down from 49% in August, when 46% disapproved.

Thirty-nine percent approve of how Biden is handling the economy, with 56% disapproving and 5% saying they don't know. On his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, 50% approve, 46% disapprove, and 3% say they don't know. In August, 46% approved of Biden's handling of the economy and 48% disapproved. His August approval for handling the pandemic was 54%, with disapproval at 42%.

While Biden's job approval rating has fallen, he leads former President Donald Trump in a hypothetical 2024 rematch, with 45% for Biden to 41% for Trump. Eleven percent of respondents say they would vote for neither, and 3% say they don't know. In the final Marquette Law School Poll before the 2020 election, among all registered voters, Biden was supported by 47%, as opposed to 43% for Trump. Biden won Wisconsin in the 2020 election by 0.6 percentage points, 49.4% to 48.8%.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin is viewed favorably by 38% and unfavorably by 39%, while 22% do not have an opinion. In August, she was viewed favorably by 40% and unfavorably by 38%, with 22% not offering an opinion.

Other political figures also were viewed more unfavorably than favorably.

- Biden is given a favorable rating by 44% and an unfavorable rating by 52%, with 4% unable to give a rating.
- Vice President Kamala Harris is seen favorably by 39% and unfavorably by 47%, with 14% unable to give a rating.
- Trump is rated favorably by 38% and unfavorably by 57%, with 5% not rating him.
- Former Vice President Mike Pence is seen favorably by 38% and unfavorably by 42%, with 20% not giving a rating.

Direction of the state and concern about issues

About the state of Wisconsin, 41% say the state is headed in the right direction, while 51% say it is off on the wrong track. In August, 39% said the state was headed in the right direction and 52% said it was on the wrong track.

Concern about inflation has increased since August. In that poll, 49% were very concerned, while October's survey shows that figure rising to 64%. In October, an additional 28% are somewhat concerned and 7% who are not too concerned or not at all concerned. In August, 35% were somewhat concerned and 14% were not too or not at all concerned.

Those very concerned about illegal immigration rose to 43% in October, from 37% in August. The number of those somewhat concerned was little changed at 25%, up slightly from 24% in August. Those not too concerned or not at all concerned amounted to 31% in October and 39% in August.

Forty percent say they are very concerned about the coronavirus pandemic, with 34% somewhat concerned and 25% not too or not at all concerned. This question was not asked in the August poll.

2020 Election

Confidence in the accuracy of the 2020 election in Wisconsin is little changed at 65% from 67% in August. Those with doubts about the election were 32% in October, the same as the August poll.

Confidence in the 2020 election—that “the votes for president were accurately cast and counted”—is strongly related to party identification, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Confidence in 2020 election results in Wisconsin, by party identification

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Almost two thirds of respondents, 65%, say they have not heard enough to have an opinion about the election review being conducted by former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Michael Gableman. Eleven percent approve of how he is handling the review and 22% disapprove.

While Republicans are much more doubtful about the accuracy of the 2020 election, as shown in Table 1 above, they are less likely than Democrats to say they have heard enough to have an opinion of the Gableman review. Some 72% of Republicans say they don't know enough about this, while 56% of Democrats and 67% of independents say they lack enough information. Views of the Gableman investigation by party are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Approval of Gableman election review, by party identification

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Half of respondents, 50%, say they have not heard enough about the election review conducted by the Legislative Audit Bureau to have an opinion of that report. There were 28% who say it shows the election was largely safe and secure and 17% who say the report raises doubts about the election. An additional 5% say they don't know. As with the Gableman review, Republicans are less aware of this report than are Democrats, while partisans differ substantially in their conclusions about the report.

Table 3: Perception of the Legislative Audit Bureau election report, by party identification

Party ID	Largely safe and secure	Raises doubts about the election	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused
Republican	8	30	54	8	0
Independent	22	18	55	5	0
Democrat	58	2	37	3	0

State issues

The decennial redistricting process is being followed very or fairly closely by 39% of respondents, while 60% say they are following it not too closely or not at all.

A majority, 63%, say redistricting should be conducted by a nonpartisan commission, while 25% say it should be done by the legislature and the governor. On this issue, there are virtually no partisan differences, as shown in Table 4, with more than 60% support for nonpartisan redistricting among each partisan group.

Table 4: Preferred method of redistricting, by party identification

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A majority, 62%, support the current state law allowing concealed carry of handguns with a required license, while 29% oppose the law. A recent legislative proposal that would allow concealed carry without requiring a license is favored by 20% and opposed by 76%.

Over two-thirds of respondents, 69%, say that crime is rising nationally, while 10% say crime is about the same and 11% say there is less crime than a year ago.

In their daily activities, 78% say they feel safe from crime, while 21% say they worry about crime. This fear of crime in daily life is not related to support for licensed concealed carry laws, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Support for licensed concealed carry, by worry about crime in daily activities

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A proposal is currently being considered to amend the state constitution so that the governor would appoint the state school superintendent. Appointment of the school superintendent by the governor is supported by 9%, while 85% prefer the current system, where the superintendent is elected.

With the U.S. Supreme Court set to hear a major abortion case on Dec. 1, a majority of Wisconsin residents, 61%, say that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 34% say it should be illegal in all or most cases. The trend in opinion on abortion is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Trend in opinion about abortion

Poll dates	Legal in all cases	Legal in most cases	Illegal in most cases	Illegal in all cases
9/13-16/12	26	34	23	13
9/27-30/12	25	35	23	12
10/11-14/12	25	34	25	12
10/25-28/12	28	32	23	12
10/21-24/13	26	36	25	10
10/23-26/14	24	34	24	15
7/11-15/18	27	36	18	11
9/12-16/18	26	36	21	9
10/24-28/18	26	29	24	14
2/19-23/20	18	37	22	15
10/26-31/21	23	38	23	11

Effect of school disruption on children

A majority of respondents, 57%, say they are very concerned about children falling behind academically due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Another 31% are somewhat concerned, and 12% are not too or not at all concerned.

Similar percentages are concerned about children's mental or emotional health being affected by the disruptions of school, with 59% very concerned, 30% somewhat concerned, and 9% not too or not at all concerned.

Tables 7 and 8 show concern about school children by whether the respondent has

a school-age child in the household. Those with children are slightly less concerned than those without children.

Table 7: Concern about children's academic progress, by children in home

Children in home	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned
Children in home	50	35	13	2
No children in home	60	29	7	3

Table 8: Concern about children's mental or emotional health, by children in home

Children in home	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned
Children in home	56	35	7	1
No children in home	60	28	6	4

A majority, 60%, say they are very satisfied or satisfied with the job public schools are doing in their community, down from 69% in the August survey by the Marquette Law School Poll. And, in the current poll, 31% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, up from 21% in August. The comparison across surveys is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Satisfaction with public schools in August and October 2021

Poll dates	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Mixed feelings (VOL)	Don't know
8/3-8/21	22	47	15	6	2	7
10/26-31/21	25	35	18	13	2	8

Satisfaction with schools by presence of children in the household and by survey is shown in Table 10. For those with children, both the percentage of very satisfied and the percentage of very dissatisfied rose from August to October, with somewhat smaller changes among those without children.

Table 10: Satisfaction with public schools, by children in home in August and October 2021

Children in home	Poll dates	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Mixed feelings (VOL)	Don't know
Children in home	8/3-8/21	22	46	17	7	2	5
Children in home	10/26-31/21	33	30	18	18	1	1
No children in home	8/3-8/21	22	48	15	6	2	7
No children in home	10/26-31/21	23	37	18	10	2	10

Fifty-five percent support requiring students and teachers to wear masks in schools, with 40% opposed. Those with children are slightly less supportive of a mask requirement, 51%, than are those without children, 58%.

Coronavirus and vaccines

Wisconsin voters are evenly divided on a federal requirement that companies with over 100 employees require vaccinations or weekly testing for workers, with 48% in favor and 48% opposed.

In this survey of registered voters, 74% say they have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, while 23% say they have not been vaccinated. An additional 3% say they don't know or declined to answer. As of Oct. 31, the final day of interviewing for this poll, the Centers for Disease Control data showed 69% of Wisconsin residents age 18 and over have received at least one dose. In the poll, 62% report having completed the vaccine series, while the CDC data for Wisconsin show 66% having completed the series.

Of those who have not yet received a vaccination, 56% say they will definitely not get the vaccine and another 18% say they probably won't get the vaccine. Seven percent of unvaccinated respondents say they will definitely get vaccinated, and another 15% say they probably will get vaccinated.

About the Marquette Law School Poll

The Marquette Law School Poll is the most extensive statewide polling project in Wisconsin history. This poll interviewed 805 registered Wisconsin voters by landline or cell phone, Oct. 26-31, 2021. The margin of error is +/-3.9 percentage points for the full sample. Some items were asked of half the sample. Those on Form A were asked of 401 respondents and have a margin of error of +/-5.6 percentage points. Form B items were asked of 404 respondents and have a margin of error of +/-5.5 percentage points.

Items asked of half-samples include on Form A concern for inflation, illegal immigration, and coronavirus; redistricting items; direction of the state and on Form B perceptions of crime; support for concealed carry; election or appointment of the state school superintendent; and opinion about abortion.

The partisan makeup of the sample, including those who lean to a party, is 45% Republican, 44% Democratic and 9% independent. The partisan makeup of the sample, excluding those who lean to a party, is 30% Republican, 29% Democratic and 40% independent.

Since January 2019, the long-term partisan balance, including those who lean to a party, in the Marquette poll has been 45% Republican and 44% Democratic, with 9% independent. Partisanship excluding those who lean has been 29% Republican and 28% Democratic, with 41% independent.

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