Marquette University: Law Poll marking 10 years of polling in 2022

Posted on Wednesday, Jul 27, 2022

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop](#).

MILWAUKEE — The Marquette University Law School Poll is celebrating 10 years of polling, having released its first survey of Wisconsin voters on Jan. 25, 2012. Over the ensuing decade, the Marquette Law Poll has become recognized across [the spectrum](#) as "[the gold standard in Wisconsin politics](#)."

The Marquette Law School Poll was established to be the most extensive polling project in Wisconsin history, with a full commitment to being an independent effort with no agenda except to reliably find out as much as is possible about public opinion in Wisconsin and to make that information publicly available. The poll is entirely funded by aggregated small donations to the Law School's Annual Fund.

"The goal of the Marquette Law School Poll is to provide a balanced and detailed understanding of how voters on all sides view and respond to the issues of the 2012 campaigns," wrote Joseph D. Kearney, dean of Marquette Law School, in [announcing the polling project in November 2011](#). "With the national attention that Wisconsin will receive in 2012 and Marquette Law School's growing reputation as a premier neutral site for debate and civil discourse on matters affecting the region and points beyond … there can be little doubt that the time, place, and people are right for the Marquette Law School Poll."

The premise of Wisconsin's important role in national politics was correct, and the decision to create the Marquette Law School Poll was even prescient, as the state has been a central battleground on the national level in each presidential election since. This has made the Marquette Law Poll a key instrument in measuring public opinion in the state come Election Day and a resource of national attention.

Since January 2012, the Marquette Law School Poll has recorded:

- Responses from over **60,000 Wisconsin voters**
- Polling involving over **1,200 unique questions**
- **Favorability of 112 political figures**, including 70 measures of favorability for Sen. Tammy Baldwin, 56 measures for Sen. Ron Johnson, and 50 for former Gov. Scott Walker. Favorability and approval were also recorded for President Joe Biden and Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump in each poll during their respective time in office.
- The Marquette Law Poll is nearing **400 unique issue questions** on marijuana legalization, gun control, public schools, COVID-19, deer hunting, farm ownership, climate change, healthcare, and a host of other policy topics.

Charles Franklin came to Marquette Law School in 2012 as a visiting professor of law and public policy, and to be director of the new Marquette Law School Poll, and then joined the Law School permanently in 2013. Franklin had been a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 1992 and co-founded pollster.com, an award-winning site for nonpartisan polling analysis. His academic articles on partisanship, public opinion, the Supreme Court, and U.S. Senate elections have appeared in major journals and as book chapters. He is a past president of the Society for Political Methodology and an elected fellow of the society. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Michigan.

Franklin's expertise was matched with Marquette Law School's Mike Gousha, distinguished fellow in law and public policy since 2007, and Alan J. Borsuk, senior fellow in law and public policy since 2009. Gousha joined the Law School after a 25-year career with WTMJ-TV in Milwaukee. During his tenure at WTMJ, he was lead anchor, a reporter, and the host of the popular interview program "Sunday Night." Borsuk spent 37 years at the *Milwaukee Journal* and *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* as a reporter, columnist, and editor. During his newspaper career, Borsuk covered a wide range of subjects, but he may be best known for his work as editor of *Wisconsin*, the Sunday magazine of the *Milwaukee Journal*, from 1986-1994, and for his reporting on education issues in Milwaukee from 1998-2009. John D. Johnson joined the Law School's group in 2016, and his duties include working with Franklin in the poll's survey design and analysis.

In 2017, Marquette President Michael R. Lovell announced a $5.5 million gift from Sheldon and Marianne Lubar, in support of the Law School's creation of the Lubar Center for Public Policy and Civic Education. The Lubar Center supports and hosts many of the Law School's civic outreach efforts, with Johnson now serving as Lubar Center Research Fellow and Hilary DeBlois as program manager for the Lubar

Center. Gousha retired from his full-time role at the Law School at the beginning of 2022 and currently serves the Law School as senior advisor in law and public policy.

The Marquette Law School Poll, in recent years in particular, has also reached beyond Wisconsin. It launched its first national polling initiative in October 2019, seeking to measure the public understanding and opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court. A second national survey about the Court was released in three parts in September 2020, and a bi-monthly series of polls began in July 2021. Through this project, the Marquette Law Poll is creating an archive of data to measure trends and changes in how the public views the Court.

The Marquette Law School Poll has been surveying the national public during an especially visible period for the Court, with contemporary surveys around the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Justice Stephen Breyer's retirement, the confirmation of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, and the release of high-profile decisions.

The Marquette Law Poll released its most recent Supreme Court survey on Wednesday, July 20, with a release of public opinion on other national topics following on July 21. The next statewide poll will be in the field and released after the state primary elections on Tuesday, Aug. 9.

Media with questions or interested in being added to the email list for announcements and releases surrounding the Marquette Law School Poll should contact Kevin Conway, associate director of university communication, at kevin.m.conway@marquette.edu.