

Marquette University: New Marquette Law School poll of Wisconsin voters finds Johnson and Evers holding slim leads as races for senator and governor tighten

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MILWAUKEE — A new Marquette Law School Poll survey of Wisconsin voters finds close races for governor and for the U.S. Senate.

Among likely voters, in his race for reelection, Sen. Ron Johnson, a Republican, is supported by 49%, while his Democratic opponent, Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, is the choice of 48%. In August, immediately after the primary election, Johnson trailed Barnes by 7 percentage points, 52% to 45%, among likely voters. All vote results include undecided voters who lean to a candidate.

In the governor's race, 47% of likely voters support Democratic Gov. Tony Evers, while 44% favor Republican Tim Michels. The independent candidate, Joan Beglinger, is chosen by 5%, with 3% who don't know. Beglinger ended her campaign on Sept. 6 but will remain on the November ballot. In the Marquette Law School Poll's August survey, Evers received 48%, Michels 44%, and Beglinger 4% among likely voters.

Table 1 shows the vote preference for governor, among likely voters in August and September and among registered voters since June. Beglinger was not included in the June survey. (All results in the tables are stated as percentages; the precise wording of the questions can be found in the online link noted above.)

Table 1: Vote for Wisconsin governor

(a) Likely voters

| Poll dates | Evers | Michels | Beglinger | Other | Don't know | Refused |
|------------|-------|---------|-----------|-------|------------|---------|
| 9/6-11/22 | 47 | 44 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| 8/10-15/22 | 48 | 44 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 |

(b) Registered voters

| Poll dates | Evers | Michels | Beglinger | Other | Don't know | Refused |
|------------|-------|---------|-----------|-------|------------|---------|
| 9/6-11/22 | 44 | 43 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| 8/10-15/22 | 45 | 43 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| 6/14-20/22 | 48 | 41 | NA | 2 | 8 | 2 |

Table 2 shows the trend in support for the Senate candidates, among likely voters in August and September and among registered voters since June.

Table 2: Vote for U.S. Senate

(a) Likely voters

| Poll dates | Barnes | Johnson | Neither | Don't know | Refused |
|------------|--------|---------|---------|------------|---------|
| 9/6-11/22 | 48 | 49 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 8/10-15/22 | 52 | 45 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

(b) Registered voters

| Poll dates | Barnes | Johnson | Neither | Don't know | Refused |
|------------|--------|---------|---------|------------|---------|
| 9/6-11/22 | 47 | 48 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 8/10-15/22 | 51 | 44 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 6/14-20/22 | 46 | 44 | 1 | 7 | 2 |

The survey was conducted Sept. 6-11, 2022, interviewing 801 Wisconsin registered voters, with a margin of error of +/- 4.3 percentage points. The margin of error among likely voters is +/- 4.9 percentage points.

Partisan support for the candidates in the race for governor is shown in Table 3 among likely voters. Both Democratic and Republican voters are strongly unified behind their respective party's candidates, with 95% of Democrats supporting Evers and 92% of Republicans supporting Michels. Forty-five percent of independents back Evers, while 39% prefer Michels. The independent candidate, Beglinger, receives 11% from independent voters, 2% from Republicans, and 2% from Democrats.

Table 3: Vote for governor among likely voters, by party identification

(a) September

| Party ID | Evers | Michels | Beglinger | Other | Don't know | Refused |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Republican | 3 | 92 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Independent | 45 | 39 | 11 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Democrat | 95 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

(b) August

| Party ID | Evers | Michels | Beglinger | Other | Don't know | Refused |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Republican | 5 | 92 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Independent | 49 | 38 | 7 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Democrat | 94 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Partisan support for the U.S. Senate candidates is shown in Table 4, among likely voters. As in the governor's race, partisans are well-aligned with their party's candidates, with 96% of Democrats supporting Barnes and 97% of Republicans supporting Johnson. Forty-eight percent of independents back Johnson, while 46% prefer Barnes.

Table 4: Vote for U.S. Senate among likely voters, by party identification

(a) September

| Party ID | Barnes | Johnson | Neither | Don't know | Refused |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Republican | 2 | 97 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Independent | 46 | 48 | 2 | 3 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|----------|----|---|---|---|---|
| Democrat | 96 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|----------|----|---|---|---|---|

(b) August

| Party ID | Barnes | Johnson | Neither | Don't know | Refused |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Republican | 6 | 94 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Independent | 55 | 40 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Democrat | 99 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Voters were asked about the chances they will vote in November—were they “absolutely certain to vote,” “very likely to vote,” were the “chances 50-50,” or “don’t you think you will vote.” Among Republicans, 77% said they are “absolutely certain” to vote in November’s elections, as did 80% of Democrats and 71% of independents. Certainty of voting by party is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Likelihood of voting, by party identification

(a) September

| Party ID | Absolutely certain | Very likely | 50-50 | Will not vote |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Republican | 77 | 16 | 3 | 3 |
| Independent | 71 | 13 | 12 | 3 |
| Democrat | 80 | 12 | 7 | 0 |

(b) August

| Party ID | Absolutely certain | Very likely | 50-50 | Will not vote |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Republican | 83 | 11 | 4 | 2 |
| Independent | 66 | 16 | 14 | 3 |
| Democrat | 82 | 8 | 5 | 5 |

The effect of different levels of turnout on vote for governor is shown in Table 6 and for Senate in Table 7. The first row shows preference among all registered voters, with the second row showing the results for an electorate composed of those either “absolutely certain” to vote or “very likely” to vote, while the third row shows the results only among likely voters (i.e., those who say they are “absolutely certain” to vote).

Table 6: Vote for governor, by certainty of voting

| How likely to vote | Evers | Michels | Beglinger | Other | Don't know |
|---|--------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Among all registered voters | 44 | 43 | 8 | 1 | 4 |
| Those “absolutely certain” or “very likely” to vote | 45 | 44 | 6 | 0 | 4 |
| Only those “absolutely certain” to vote | 47 | 44 | 5 | 0 | |