Marquette University: New Marquette Law School poll survey of Wisconsin finds close races in Senate and governor primaries and in November final elections, with enthusiasm for voting gap favoring Republicans

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MILWAUKEE – A new Marquette Law School Poll survey of Wisconsin finds close races shaping up in both Republican and Democratic gubernatorial and U.S. Senate primaries in August, as well as in the November U.S. Senate race. The poll also finds that incumbent Gov. Tony Evers has an early advantage in the general election for governor.

In the first Marquette Law School Poll conducted since he entered the race in April, Tim Michels is the choice of 27% of Republicans (including independents who lean Republican) and independents who say they will vote in the GOP primary for governor. Rebecca Kleefisch is supported by 26%, Kevin Nicholson is supported by 10%, Tim Ramthun is the choice of 3%, and Adam Fischer is supported by less than 0.5%. A substantial 32% of Republican primary voters remain undecided, down from 46% who were undecided in the Marquette Law School Poll conducted in April.

In the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate, Mandela Barnes receives support of 25% and Alex Lasry is supported by 21% among Democrats (including independents who lean Democratic) and independents who say they will vote in the Democratic

primary. Sarah Godlewski is the choice of 9%, and Tom Nelson holds 7%. The other seven candidates received 1% or less support.

Many Democratic primary voters remain undecided, with 36% saying they don't know how they will vote, which is less than the 48% who were undecided in the April survey.

The survey was conducted June 14-20, 2022, interviewing 803 Wisconsin registered voters, with a margin of error of +/-4.3 percentage points. The margin of error for Democratic primary voters is 6.2 percentage points and for Republican primary voters is 6.3 percentage points.

Table 1 shows the trends in support for the Republican primary for governor since February. (All results in the tables are stated as percentages; the precise wording of the questions can be found in the online link noted at the top.)

Table 1: Republican primary preferences, U.S. Senate, February-June 2022

Primary choice	June	April	February
Michels	27	NA	NA
Kleefisch	26	32	30
Nicholson	10	10	8
Ramthun	3	4	5
Other	2	3	1
Fischer	*	NA	NA
Will not vote	0	3	1
Don't know	32	46	54
Refused	0	1	2

* indicates less than .5% but more than 0

Table 2 shows the trends in support for the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate since February.

Table 2: Democratic primary preferences, U.S. Senate, February-June 2022

Primary choice	June	April	February
Barnes	25	19	23

Lasry	21	16	13
Godlewski	9	7	3
Nelson	7	5	5
Peckarsky	1	1	0
Olikara	*	0	0
Lewis	*	1	2
Murphy	*	*	2
Lee	0	0	0
Rumbaugh	0	0	0
Williams	0	*	*
Battino	NA	NA	1
Will not vote	0	3	3
Don't know	36	48	48
Refused	0	1	1

* indicates less than .5% but more than 0

General election for governor

For the first time in the 2022 election cycle, this poll asked about possible November general election pairings for governor, matching incumbent Gov. Tony Evers against each of the top four Republican primary candidates. These results are shown in Table 3 (a) through Table 3 (d). Evers is supported by 47% to Kleefisch's 43%, and Evers gets 48% to Michels' 41%. Against Nicholson, Evers receives 48% to 40%. Evers holds a 51% to 34% margin over Ramthun. Here, and in subsequent tables, candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

Table 3: November general election for governor

(a) Evers vs. Kleefisch

Poll dates	Evers	Kleefisch	Someone else	Would not vote	Don't know	Refused
6/14-20/22	47	43	1	2	7	1

(b) Evers vs. Michels

Poll dates	Evers	Michels	Someone else	Would not vote	Don't know	Refused
6/14-20/22	48	41	2	1	8	1

(c) Evers vs. Nicholson

Poll dates	Evers	Nicholson	Someone else	Would not vote	Don't know	Refused
6/14-20/22	48	40	1	1	8	1

(d) Evers vs. Ramthun

Poll dates	Evers	Ramthun	Someone else	Would not vote	Don't know	Refused
6/14-20/22	51	34	2	1	11	1

General election for U.S. Senate

The November race for U.S. Senate will match incumbent Republican Sen. Ron Johnson against the winner of the August Democratic primary. This poll paired each of the top four primary candidates against Johnson. This is the first such matchup in the Marquette Law School Poll this cycle. These results are shown in Table 4 (a) through Table 4 (b). Johnson slightly trails three of the four Democrat candidates polled, including 46%-44% against Barnes, 45%-43% against Godlewski, and 44%-43% against Nelson. Previewing a possible matchup with Lasry, Johnson slightly leads in support, 45%-42%.

Table 4: November general election for U.S. Senate

(a) Johnson vs. Barnes

Poll dates	Johnson	Barnes	Someone else	Would not vote	Don't know	Refused
6/14-20/22	44	46	1	1	7	1

(b) Johnson vs. Godlewski

Poll dates	Johnson	Godlewski	Someone else	Would not vote	Don't know	Refused
6/14-20/22	43	45	2	1	9	1

(c) Johnson vs. Lasry

Poll dates	Johnson	Lasry	Someone else	Would not vote	Don't know	Refused
6/14-20/22	45	42	2	1	10	1

(d) Johnson vs. Nelson

Poll dates	Johnson	Nelson	Someone else	Would not vote	Don't know	Refused
6/14-20/22	43	44	2	1	10	1

Favorability of the primary candidates

Table 5 shows the favorability ratings of the top four Republican candidates for governor and the percentage with no opinion (i.e., those saying they haven't heard enough or don't know how they feel about the candidate). Michels and Kleefisch have essentially equally positive net favorable ratings from GOP primary voters, with Nicholson about half as net favorable. Ramthun has a net negative favorability rating. Among these candidates, 46% or more of Republican voters say they don't have an opinion of each, less than two months before the primary on Aug. 9.

Table 5: Favorability of Republican primary candidates, among Republican primary voters

Candidate	Net	Favorable opinion	Unfavorable	No opinion
Kleefisch	34	44	10	46
Michels	35	42	7	51
Nicholson	19	27	8	65
Ramthun	-3	7	10	84

Favorability of the Democratic primary candidates for governor among Democratic primary voters is shown in Table 6. Barnes has the highest net favorability, followed by Lasry, Godlewski, and Nelson. In each instance, over 50% of Democratic primary

voters say they don't have an opinion of the candidates

Table 6: Favorability to Democratic primary candidates, among Democratic primary voters

Candidate	Net	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
Barnes	38	41	3	56
Godlewski	17	24	7	69
Lasry	22	31	<	

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