



**NBC News/Marist Poll:
Romney Leads Santorum by 7 Points in Wisconsin**
*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

In the race for the Republican nomination in Wisconsin, Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum face another competitive contest in the Midwest. Romney has 40% to 33% for Santorum among likely Republican primary voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, early voters, and those who voted absentee in the state.

Here is how the contest stands in Wisconsin:

- 40% for Mitt Romney
- 33% for Rick Santorum
- 11% for Ron Paul
- 8% for Newt Gingrich
- 7% are undecided

“The pattern of support is similar in Wisconsin as elsewhere,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “The advantage for Romney is the Wisconsin GOP primary electorate more closely resembles states he has carried.”

Key points:

- 43% of likely Republican primary voters who are **liberal or moderate** support Romney compared with 24% for Santorum. Romney -- 42% -- also leads Santorum -- 33% -- among **conservatives**. However, Santorum -- 42% -- bests Romney -- 33% -- among those who are **very conservative**.
- Among those who **strongly support the Tea Party**, Santorum has an 8 percentage point lead over Romney, 40% to 32%. In contrast, Romney -- 42% -- has the advantage over Santorum -- 31% -- among those who are **not Tea Party supporters**.

- **Evangelical Christians** favor Santorum 40% to 29% for Romney.
- Romney -- 47% -- is ahead of Santorum -- 32% -- among those who earn **\$75,000 or more** a year. Those who earn **less than \$75,000** divide. 35% back Romney while the same proportion -- 35% -- is for Santorum.

Lukewarm Support for Candidates

Only 47% of likely Republican primary voters in Wisconsin are firmly committed to their choice of candidate. 39% are somewhat in their candidate's camp. 13% might vote differently on Election Day, and 1% is unsure.

Key points:

- 49% of **Santorum's supporters** strongly support him compared with 46% of **Romney's backers**, 45% of those **who are behind Paul**, and 40% of **those who are for Gingrich**.

Romney and Santorum Head to Head: Advantage Still Romney

What if Romney and Santorum were the only two candidates in the Republican contest? 46% would back Romney while 41% would support Santorum. One percent would choose another candidate, and 12% are undecided.

Obama Leads Potential GOP Challengers

In a state Barack Obama carried by 14 points in 2008, President Obama outpaces all of his Republican challengers.

Among registered voters in Wisconsin:

- Obama -- 51% -- leads **Santorum** -- 38% -- by 13 percentage points. 11% are undecided.
- 51% support Obama compared with 36% for **Paul**. 13% are undecided.
- Obama receives 52% to 35% for **Romney**. 13% are undecided.
- President Obama -- 56% -- has the widest lead against **Gingrich** -- 31%. 14% are undecided.

In each matchup, including the Obama-Romney tossup, independent and Republican voters are more undecided than Democrats. Independents who lean toward the Republican party and those who do not lean toward any party are more likely to be undecided in their choice for president than independents who lean toward the Democratic party.

“President Obama is running behind his 2008 vote,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “But, the wide gap between Obama and his potential opponents results from a lack of consensus among Republican and some independent voters behind the eventual GOP nominee.”

Only 37% Very Enthusiastic to Vote in November

Less than four in ten Wisconsin registered voters -- 37% -- say they are very enthusiastic about voting in November's general election. About one-third -- 33% -- are somewhat enthusiastic while 19% are not too enthusiastic. 11% are not enthusiastic at all.

Dems Viewed as Having Wider Appeal... Battle with GOP on Social Issues

When it comes to the party which does a better job appealing to voters who are not among its hard-core supporters, 48% of registered voters in Wisconsin say the Democratic party better accomplishes this goal. 32% disagree and believe the Republicans attract those who are not as fervent in their support. A notable 20% are unsure.

Key points:

- Looking at independent voters, a plurality -- 44% -- views the Democrats as appealing to less ardent supporters compared with 28% who have this view of the Republicans. 28% are unsure.

When it comes to social issues, Democrats edge Republicans. 45% of Wisconsin registered voters think the Democrats more closely represent their views on these issues while 41% report the Republicans come closer to their positions. 14% are unsure.

Key points:

- 44% of independent voters identify more closely with the Democrats on social issues compared with 36% who think the Republicans come closer to their position. One in five -- 20% -- is unsure.

Obama Approval Rating at 50%

Half of registered voters in Wisconsin -- 50% -- approve of the job President Obama is doing in office. 40% disapprove, and 10% are unsure.

Better Economic Days Ahead, Says Majority

Has the U.S. economy turned the economic corner? 52% of registered voters in Wisconsin believe the worst of the nation's economic news is over while 40% think the worst is still to come. Seven percent are unsure.

Looking at the state of the U.S. economy in the next 12 months, more than three in ten Wisconsin registered voters -- 32% -- think it will get better. 19% report it will get worse, and 45% believe it will stay about the same. Three percent are unsure.

Country Needs Course Correction, Says Majority

55% of Wisconsin registered voters believe the nation is off on the wrong track while 39% say it is headed in the right direction. Six percent are unsure.

Voters Divide about Walker's Job Performance, Recall Election

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker is facing a recall election, and right now, registered voters in the state are torn about his performance as governor. 48% approve of the job he is doing while 48% disapprove. Four percent are unsure.

Key points:

- There is a partisan divide. Most Republicans -- 91% -- approve of Walker's job performance while most Democrats -- 84% -- disapprove. Independent voters in Wisconsin also divide. 47% approve while the same proportion -- 47% -- disapproves.

Will voters support Walker in the upcoming recall election? 46% say they will support Governor Walker while 48% plan to back the Democratic candidate. Six percent are undecided.

Key points:

- Independent voters divide here as well. 46% favor the Democratic candidate while 45% are for Walker.

More Republican Voters Following Recall Election than GOP Presidential Primary

A majority of likely Republican primary voters in Wisconsin are focusing more on state politics than national politics. 51% say they are tracking the recall election more closely than the Republican primary. 37% report the opposite to be the case, and 12% are unsure.

Baldwin with Plurality Support in U.S. Senate Race

In the race for the open U.S. Senate seat in Wisconsin, Democrat Tammy Baldwin receives the support of 45% of registered voters in the state. A generic Republican candidate garners 40%, and 16% are undecided.