



## **NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll: Six Point Contest in Wisconsin**

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### **This NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll Reports:**

President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden -- 51% -- lead Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan -- 45% -- among Wisconsin likely voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee. One percent is for another candidate, and only 3% are undecided.

"The battle for Wisconsin's ten electoral votes looks a lot like it did before the first presidential debate," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Obama has the advantage over Romney but his lead is less than the double-digit margin he won the state by in 2008."

In NBC News/WSJ/Marist's September survey in the state, Obama and Biden had the support of 50% of likely voters, including those who were undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. This compares with 45% who backed Romney and Ryan. At that time, only 1% was behind another candidate, and 4% were undecided.

### **Key points:**

- **Debate difference?** There is no statistical difference in the support the candidates receive after the presidential debate on Tuesday night than before it. Only 4% of likely voters say they decided whom to support after this week's debate. Prior to the debate, 50% of likely voters supported the president while 45% backed Romney. Two percent were behind another candidate, and 3% were undecided. Following the debate, on Wednesday, 51% of likely voters are behind the president while 45% support Romney. One percent is for another candidate, and 4% are undecided.
- **Party ID.** 96% of likely Democratic voters support Obama. 97% of Republicans who are likely to go to the polls are behind Romney. Among independent likely voters, 48% support Obama compared with 44% for Romney.

- **Enthusiasm.** 62% of Wisconsin likely voters are very enthusiastic about voting next month. This is a slight increase from September when 58% of likely voters said they were very enthusiastic about going to the polls. Looking at each candidate's supporters, slightly more Romney backers -- 68% -- express a high level of enthusiasm compared with 63% of Obama's supporters who express a similar degree of enthusiasm. Each candidate has also experienced a boost in their supporters' enthusiasm. When NBC News/WSJ/Marist last reported this question in September, 64% of likely voters behind Romney had a high level of enthusiasm compared with 58% of Obama's backers.
- **Intensity of support.** 90% of likely voters in Wisconsin strongly support their choice of candidate. Eight percent are somewhat committed to their pick while 1% might vote differently on Election Day. Less than 1% is unsure. 90% of Obama's supporters are firmly entrenched in his camp. This compares with 91% of Romney's backers who say the same. In September, 86% of Romney backers in Wisconsin said they strongly supported their choice. 87% of likely voters behind Obama were firmly committed to him at that time.
- **Gender.** Obama -- 57% -- leads Romney -- 39% -- among women who are likely to vote. Among men likely to cast a ballot, Romney -- 51% -- is ahead of Obama -- 44%.
- **Age.** Looking at Wisconsin likely voters under the age of 30, 56% support Obama compared with 35% for Romney. Among those 30 to 44, Obama receives the support of 51% to Romney's 46%. Obama -- 50% -- also edges Romney -- 45% -- among likely voters 45 to 59 and 50% to 46% among Wisconsin likely voters 60 and older.
- **Already voted.** Only 6% of likely voters in Wisconsin have already cast a ballot. The president has a commanding lead over Romney -- 64% to 35%, among likely voters in Wisconsin who have either voted early or plan to do so before Election Day which represents 15% of the likely electorate. Romney and Obama are neck and neck -- 48% to 47% -- among voters who plan to go to the polls on Election Day.

Among registered voters in Wisconsin, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee, Obama and Biden receive 50% to 44% for Romney and Ryan. Two percent support another candidate while 4% are undecided.

### **Round Two: Did Tuesday's Debate Matter?**

95% of likely voters say they made their candidate selection prior to Tuesday night's debate. Four percent made their choice after the debate. One percent is unsure.

94% of Obama's supporters decided to back him before Tuesday night's matchup. This compares with 5% who did so after the debate. Looking at Romney's backers, 96% chose him prior to the debate while 3% say Tuesday's exchange sealed the deal.

When it comes to how Wisconsin registered voters received their information about the debate, 62% watched it while 18% followed the news coverage about it. 20% watched neither the debate nor the news reports about it.

Looking at party, 67% of Republicans and 65% of Democrats watched the debate firsthand. Among independent voters in Wisconsin, 55% watched the debate, and 22% saw the news coverage about it. 23% of this voting group neither watched the debate nor its news coverage.

### **Obama Still Viewed Favorably in Wisconsin... Slight Improvement in Romney's Image**

53% of Wisconsin likely voters have a favorable impression of the president while 44% do not. Three percent are unsure.

Last month, 51% thought well of Obama while 44% had an unfavorable opinion of him. Four percent, at the time, were unsure.

Romney's favorability rating in the state is slightly improved from NBC News/WSJ/Marist's September survey. 47% of likely voters in Wisconsin have a positive impression of him compared with 43% who had a similar view of him last month. 47% have an unfavorable opinion of him now, virtually unchanged from the 46% who held this view in the prior survey. Six percent are currently unsure. 10% were unsure a month ago.

### **Voters Divide about Biden... Half Think Well of Ryan**

47% of likely voters in Wisconsin have a favorable impression of Vice President Joe Biden. This compares with 46% who have an unfavorable one. Seven percent are unsure.

Last month, 45% had a less than stellar view of Biden while 42% thought well of him. 12%, at the time, were unsure.

What do Wisconsin likely voters think of their favorite son? In his home state, Paul Ryan is viewed favorably by 50% of likely voters. 43% have an unfavorable opinion of him, and 7% are unsure.

In NBC News/WSJ/Marist's previous survey, 49% of likely voters in Wisconsin perceived Ryan favorably while 40% did not. 11% were unsure.

### **Voters Divide about Economy...Obama Tops Romney on Foreign Policy**

47% of registered voters in Wisconsin believe Obama will better handle the U.S. economy. 46%, however, have this impression of Romney. Seven percent are unsure. Similar proportions of likely voters share these views. 48% of Wisconsin likely voters think Obama

is more capable to deal with this issue while 47% say Romney is the candidate to turn around the nation's economy. Five percent are unsure.

Last month, 45% of registered voters statewide thought Obama was better prepared to deal with the economy compared with 44% who said Romney was the stronger candidate on the issue. 11% were unsure.

On foreign policy, Obama -- 51% -- bests Romney -- 42% -- among Wisconsin registered voters. Seven percent are unsure. Among likely voters statewide, 52% believe Obama is the stronger candidate on foreign policy compared with 42% who have this view of Romney. Six percent are unsure.

When NBC News/WSJ/Marist last reported this question in September, 51% of registered voters gave Obama the nod on foreign policy. This compares with 39% who thought Romney was the stronger candidate in the realm of foreign policy. 11% were unsure.

### **Obama Approval Rating at 49% in Wisconsin**

Nearly half of registered voters in Wisconsin -- 49% -- approve of how President Obama is doing his job. 45% disapprove, and 5% are unsure.

Last month, 48% gave Obama a thumbs-up while 44% said he missed the mark. Seven percent, at the time, were unsure.

### **Nation Needs a New Direction, Says Majority**

52% of Wisconsin registered voters think the country is moving in the wrong direction. 44% say it is traveling in the right one, and 4% are unsure.

In September, 54% reported the country was on the wrong road compared with 38% who thought it was on the proper path. Seven percent were unsure.

### **Baldwin and Thompson in Competitive Contest for U.S. Senate in Wisconsin**

Democrat Tammy Baldwin receives the support of 49% of likely voters, and Republican Tommy Thompson is backed by 45%, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee. One percent supports another candidate, and 5% are undecided.

In NBC News/WSJ/Marist's September survey, 48% of Wisconsin likely voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, backed Baldwin while 46% were for Thompson. Five percent were undecided.

Among registered voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee, Baldwin receives 48% to 45% for Thompson. One percent is behind another candidate, and 5% are undecided.