



NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll: Competitive Contest in Wisconsin

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This NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll Reports:

Among likely voters in Wisconsin, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee, President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden receive the support of 49% to 46% for Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. Two percent back another candidate, and 3% are undecided.

“President Obama is advantaged by voters who plan to vote early,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “But, Romney benefits from greater enthusiasm among his supporters.”

In NBC News/WSJ/Marist’s previous survey conducted in Wisconsin earlier this month, Obama and Biden -- 51% -- were ahead of Romney and Ryan -- 45% -- among Wisconsin likely voters, including those who were undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee. One percent supported another candidate, and only 3%, at that time, were undecided.

Key points:

- **Party ID.** There is a wide partisan divide. 93% of likely Democratic voters are behind the president while 97% of Republicans who are likely to vote back Romney. Among independent likely voters, 48% support Obama compared with 44% for Romney.
- **Enthusiasm.** 66% of likely voters in Wisconsin are very enthusiastic about casting their ballot. Among Romney’s supporters, 74% express a high degree of enthusiasm compared with 65% of Obama’s backers. Overall, enthusiasm has inched up among

likely voters in Wisconsin. Earlier this month, 62% of likely voters expressed a high degree of enthusiasm.

- **Intensity of support.** 89% of likely voters who prefer a candidate are firmly committed to their choice. Nine percent somewhat support their pick, and 1% might vote differently come Election Day. Looking at each candidate's supporters, 88% of likely voters who support Obama say they will not waver in their support. This compares with 91% of Romney's backers who say the same.
- **Gender.** There is a gender gap. 55% of women, who are likely to vote, support Obama compared with 41% for Romney. Among men likely to cast a ballot, 51% back Romney while 43% are for the president.
- **Age.** Young voters favor the president. 63% of likely voters in Wisconsin under the age of 30 rally for Obama while 31% tout Romney. Those 30 to 44 divide, 48% for Obama and 47% for Romney. Looking at voters 45 to 59, Romney leads 51% to 45% for Obama. Among likely voters 60 and older, Obama has 51% to 46% for Romney.
- **Early voters.** 25% of registered voters in Wisconsin have either already voted or plan to do so before Election Day. Obama -- 59% -- leads Romney -- 39% -- among likely voters who have cast their ballot or plan to do so early. Among likely voters who plan to go to the polls next Tuesday, Romney has the support of 50% to 45% for Obama.

Among registered voters in Wisconsin, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee, Obama and Biden receive 49%. Romney and Ryan garner 45%. Two percent support another candidate, and 4% are undecided.

Majority Perceives Obama Favorably... Divide about Romney

A majority of likely Wisconsin voters -- 53% -- have a favorable opinion of President Obama. 44% have an unfavorable one, and 4% are unsure.

This is unchanged from earlier this month. 53%, at that time, had a positive impression of Obama, and 44% did not. Three percent were unsure.

Looking at Romney's favorability rating, 47% think well of him while 47% do not. Seven percent are unsure.

Voters' impressions of Romney are also unchanged from NBC News/WSJ/Marist's previous survey. 47% of likely voters in Wisconsin, then, had a favorable opinion of Romney while the same proportion -- 47% -- had an unfavorable view of him. Six percent, at that time, were unsure.

Obama and Romney Vie for Top Spot on Economy... Obama Outpaces Romney on Foreign Policy

Among Wisconsin registered voters, 47% think Obama is better prepared to handle the nation's economy. This compares with 46% who believe Romney is better suited for the job. Six percent are unsure. Similar proportions of likely voters share these views. 47% report Obama is the stronger candidate on the economy while the same proportion, 47%, say Romney is more capable in this area. Six percent are unsure.

Two weeks ago, 47% of registered voters in Wisconsin thought Obama had a better chance of turning the economy around while 46% had this view of Romney. Seven percent were unsure.

When it comes to foreign policy, Obama -- 52% -- has the advantage over Romney -- 40% -- among registered voters statewide. Eight percent are unsure. Among likely voters in Wisconsin, 52% say Obama is better suited to take on foreign policy issues. 41% disagree and think Romney is more capable on this issue. Seven percent are unsure.

Earlier this month, 51% of registered voters thought Obama would be better than Romney -- 42% -- in the foreign policy sphere. At that time, 7% were unsure.

Nearly Half Approve of Obama's Job Performance

49% of registered voters statewide approve of how President Obama is doing his job. 44% disapprove and 6% are unsure.

In NBC News/WSJ/Marist's previous survey in Wisconsin, 49% gave the president a thumbs-up. 45% reported Obama's performance was subpar, and 5% were unsure.

Plurality Think New Course Needed for the Nation

48% of Wisconsin registered voters think the country is moving in the wrong direction. This compares with 45% who believe it is traveling in the right one. Seven percent are unsure.

Two weeks ago, 52% of Wisconsin registered voters thought the nation needed a new path while 44% said its trajectory was on target. At that time, 4% were unsure.

Baldwin and Thompson in Close Contest for U.S. Senate in Wisconsin

Among Wisconsin likely voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee, Democrat Tammy Baldwin has the support of 48% to 47% for Republican Tommy Thompson. One percent is behind another candidate, and 4% are undecided.

Earlier this month, Baldwin had 49% to 45% for Thompson among likely voters, including those who were undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee. One percent supported another candidate, and 5% were undecided.

Among registered voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee, 48% back Baldwin compared with 46% for Thompson. One percent is behind another candidate, and 5% are undecided.