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This release is also available online.

Marquette Law School Poll finds 4 out of 5 say Wisconsin legislature should have passed Evers/GOP property tax, rebates, and special education bill

Also:

- Strong majority support for bill among Republicans, independents, and Democrats
- 69% say bill should have been passed now, as opposed to waiting until next year for further information on budget surplus or deficit
- Fewer than 20% say political figures who opposed the bill did the right thing
- 65% say Evers did the right thing in supporting the bill

Please note: Complete Poll results and methodology information can be found online at law.marquette.edu/poll

MILWAUKEE — A new Marquette Law School Poll finds 80% of Wisconsin adults say the legislature should have passed a proposed bill using the projected state budget surplus to reduce property taxes, increase special education funding, and provide rebates to taxpayers. Eleven percent say the legislature should have defeated the bill, and 9% don't know whether the bill should have passed or not.

The bill, proposed by Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and Republicans Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Senate Majority leader Devin LeMahieu, passed the Assembly with bipartisan support but was defeated in the Senate on May 13. In the Senate, 3 Republicans joined all 15 Democrats in voting no, while 15 Republicans voted for the bill.

In a rare level of agreement across party lines, 77% of Republicans, 81% of independents, and 82% of Democrats in the poll say the legislature should have passed the surplus bill, as shown in Table 1. (All results in the tables are stated as percentages.)

Table 1: Pass or defeat budget surplus bill

Among adults

Party ID	Pass or defeat		
	Should have passed the bill	Should have defeated the bill	Don't know
Among all adults	80	11	9
Republican	77	16	8
Independent	81	8	11
Democrat	82	10	8

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin survey, May 20-21, 2026

Question: On May 11, Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and Republican legislative leaders announced an agreement on a bill that would have used \$1.8 billion of the projected \$2.5 billion state budget surplus to increase funding for special education, reduce school property taxes by about 5%, and send rebate checks of \$300 to individuals, \$600 to married couples, who paid state income taxes. It would also have eliminated taxes on tips and overtime. Do you think the state legislature (should have passed the bill), or (should it have defeated the bill)?

The survey was conducted May 20-21, 2026, interviewing 454 Wisconsin adults, with a margin of error of +/-5.5 percentage points.

There was similarly broad and strong support for the bill across ideological lines, with more than three-quarters of conservatives, moderates, and liberals in favor of the bill, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Pass or defeat budget surplus bill

Among adults

Ideology	Pass or defeat		
	Should have passed the bill	Should have defeated the bill	Don't know
Among all adults	80	11	9
Conservative	78	12	10
Moderate	86	10	5
Liberal	78	12	10

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin survey, May 20-21, 2026

Question: On May 11, Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and Republican legislative leaders announced an agreement on a bill that would have used \$1.8 billion of the projected \$2.5 billion state budget surplus to increase funding for special education, reduce school property taxes by about 5%, and send rebate checks of \$300 to individuals, \$600 to married couples, who paid state income taxes. It would also have eliminated taxes on tips and overtime. Do you think the state legislature (should have passed the bill), or (should it have defeated the bill)?

Support for the bill was also strongly positive across all geographic regions of the state, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Pass or defeat budget surplus bill

Among adults

Region	Pass or defeat		
	Should have passed the bill	Should have defeated the bill	Don't know
Among all adults	80	11	9
Milwaukee city	88	9	2
Rest of Milwaukee media market	77	11	12
Madison media market	78	13	8
Green Bay/Appleton media market	81	15	4
North and west media markets	80	8	12

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin survey, May 20-21, 2026

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Fiscal issues

Opponents of the surplus bill during the legislative process pointed to the potential fiscal consequences of spending a projected surplus now, when the state's financial situation remains uncertain for next year's budget. A second question in the Marquette poll included this fiscal concern and asked whether the respondent thought the bill should be delayed until next year or if it would be better to pass the bill now. With this concern mentioned, 69% say it would be better to provide the spending, rebates, and school aid now, while 21% say it would be better to delay this until next year and 9% say they don't know.

Partisan differences are slight with this question, with more than two-thirds each of Republicans, independents, and Democrats in favor of passing the surplus bill now rather than waiting, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Pass budget surplus bill now or wait until next year, by party identification

Among adults

Party ID	Pass now or wait		
	Better to delay special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks until next year	Better to provide special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks now	Don't know
Among all adults	21	69	9
Republican	24	68	8
Independent	22	67	11
Democrat	18	74	9

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin survey, May 20-21, 2026

Question: Some have argued that the bill was fiscally irresponsible for spending a projected surplus now that might lead to a deficit in future budgets. Would it be better to delay providing special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks until next year, or would it be better to provide them now, even if it might affect the budget next year?

Moderates are most in favor of passage of the surplus bill now, 78%, with smaller majorities of conservatives, 63%, and liberals, 71%, in favor of this also, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Pass budget surplus bill now or wait until next year, by ideology

Among adults

Ideology	Pass now or wait		
	Better to delay special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks until next year	Better to provide special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks now	Don't know
Among all adults	21	69	9
Conservative	27	63	9
Moderate	15	78	8
Liberal	19	71	10

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin survey, May 20-21, 2026

Question: Some have argued that the bill was fiscally irresponsible for spending a projected surplus now that might lead to a deficit in future budgets. Would it be better to delay providing special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks until next year, or would it be better to provide them now, even if it might affect the budget next year?

Respondents favor action on the surplus bill this year across all regions, including both the Madison media market, a heavily Democratic part of the state, and the north and west of the state, a solidly Republican area. These results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Pass budget surplus bill now or wait until next year, by region

Among adults

Region	Pass now or wait		
	Better to delay special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks until next year	Better to provide special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks now	Don't know
Among all adults	21	69	9
Milwaukee city	12	78	9
Rest of Milwaukee media market	20	69	11
Madison media market	27	64	9
Green Bay/Appleton media market	21	67	11
North and west media markets	21	73	6

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin survey, May 20-21, 2026

Question: Some have argued that the bill was fiscally irresponsible for spending a projected surplus now that might lead to a deficit in future budgets. Would it be better to delay providing special education funding, property tax reductions, and rebate checks until next year, or would it be better to provide them now, even if it might affect the budget next year?

Reaction to candidate positions on the surplus bill

Respondents were given a reminder of the positions the legislative parties, gubernatorial candidates, and Evers took on the surplus bill, including this statement:

The bill was defeated in the state Senate on May 13, with all 15 Democratic senators and 3 Republicans voting against the bill, versus 15 Republicans voting for it. The bill was also opposed by Republican candidate for governor Tom Tiffany and most of the Democratic candidates for governor.

Respondents were then asked about the positions of the Democratic candidates, Tiffany, and Evers on the surplus bill.

Fewer than 20% say the opposition from the gubernatorial candidates was the right thing for them to do, with a slight majority saying it was the wrong thing to do, while just under 30% say they don't know if these positions were right or wrong. In contrast, 65% say Evers' support for the bill was the right thing to do, with 15% saying it was the wrong thing and 20% saying they don't know. The results for each of these political figures are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Right or wrong position on the budget surplus bill

Among adults

Political figure	Right or wrong position		
	It was the right thing for (them/him) to do	It was the wrong thing for (them/him) to do	Don't know
Democratic candidates for governor opposing	19	54	27
Republican candidate for governor Tom Tiffany opposing	18	53	29
Democratic Gov. Tony Evers supporting	65	15	20

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin survey, May 20-21, 2026

Question: How do you feel about (Democratic candidates for governor opposing) (Republican candidate for governor Tom Tiffany opposing) (Democratic Gov. Tony Evers supporting) the bill?

Despite ordinary partisan affinity, knowing the positions of political leaders for or against the bill did not bring rank-and-file partisans into alignment with any of their party's leaders who opposed the bill. Rather, for example, regardless of party, 59% or more of each group said Evers did the right thing in supporting the bill.

The substantial "don't know" rate suggests discomfort among respondents when the positions of their own party's political figures conflict with the respondents' policy preferences. At the same time, the impact of partisanship is rather limited. Fewer than 30% of any partisan group says the opposition from Democratic gubernatorial candidates or from Tiffany was the right thing for them or him to do, while 48% to 59% of each partisan camp say opposition was the wrong position for both Democratic candidates and for Tiffany. "Don't know" rates range from 20% to 32% across partisan groups.

In the case of Evers' support for the bill, 59% of Republicans, 60% of independents, and 76% of Democrats say Evers did the right thing.

These comparisons are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Political figures' positions on budget surplus bill, by party identification

Among adults

Party ID	Right or wrong position		
	It was the right thing for (them/him) to do	It was the wrong thing for (them/him) to do	Don't know
Democratic candidates for governor opposing			
Republican	21	59	20
Independent	19	52	29
Democrat	17	51	32
Republican candidate for governor Tom Tiffany opposing			
Republican	28	48	25
Independent	15	55	30
Democrat	12	57	31
Democratic Gov. Tony Evers supporting			
Republican	59	21	20
Independent	60	13	28
Democrat	76	11	12

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin surveys, latest: May 20-21, 2026

Question: How do you feel about (Democratic candidates for governor opposing) (Republican candidate for governor Tom Tiffany opposing) (Democratic Gov. Tony Evers supporting) the bill?

Will positions on the bill matter in November's election?

Twenty-five percent of adults say candidate positions on the surplus bill will be very important for their vote in November for governor and the legislature. Another 48% say it will be somewhat important, while 21% say it is not too important and 6% say not at all important.

Those who favored passage of the surplus bill are slightly more likely to say the bill will be very important for their vote, 28%, compared to those who opposed the bill, 20%. There is little partisan gap in importance of positions on the bill for the upcoming elections, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Importance of budget surplus bill for November vote, by party identification

Among adults

Party ID	Importance for Nov. vote			
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important
Among all adults	25	48	21	6
Republican	23	50	17	10
Independent	27	46	21	6
Democrat	25	47	26	2

Marquette Law School Poll, Wisconsin survey, May 20-21, 2026

Question: How important are the positions taken by candidates on this bill for your vote in November for governor and for state legislature?

About the Marquette Law School Poll

The Marquette Law School Poll is the most extensive statewide polling project in Wisconsin history. The survey was conducted May 20-21, 2026, interviewing 454 Wisconsin adults, with a margin of error of +/-5.5 percentage points.

The survey was conducted with a sample selected from the SSRS Opinion Panel, a probability sample drawn from postal addresses across the state and invited to take part in surveys online. The interview was conducted online with all respondents. Full details of the methodology are contained in the methodology statement at the link below.

The partisan makeup of the sample is 33% Republican, 31% Democratic, and 36% independent. In all polls conducted in 2025 and 2026, the combined samples were 36% Republican, 32% Democratic, and 32% independent.

The entire questionnaire, methodology statement, full results, and breakdowns by demographic groups are available on the [Marquette Law School website](#).

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