

Contact: Kevin Conway
Associate Director of University Communication
(414) 288-4745 – office
(414) 202-9329 – mobile
kevin.m.conway@marquette.edu

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New Marquette Law School Poll finds majorities of Wisconsin voters disapprove of Trump foreign policy and killing of Iranian general

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

MILWAUKEE — A new Marquette Law School poll of Wisconsin registered voters finds 61 percent saying Iran and the United States are likely to avoid a major military conflict following the U.S. drone attack that killed an Iranian general and an Iranian missile attack on bases in Iraq where U.S. troops are stationed. Thirty percent believe that a major military conflict is likely and 8 percent say they don't know.

Forty-three percent agree with the statement, "It's about time that the U.S. struck back against Iran," while 51 percent disagree and 5 percent say they don't know.

In the wake of the military exchange between the United States and Iran, 44 percent approve of President Donald J. Trump's handling of foreign policy and 53 percent disapprove, with 2 percent saying they don't know. In December, 43 percent approved and 54 percent disapproved.

The trend in opinion of Trump's foreign policy is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Approval of Trump's handling of foreign policy, by survey dates

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
10/13-17/19	37	59	4
11/13-17/19	44	52	4
12/3-8/19	43	54	2
1/8-12/20	44	53	2

The poll was conducted Jan. 8-12, 2020. The sample included 800 registered voters in Wisconsin interviewed by cell phone or landline, with a margin of error of +/- 4.1 percentage points.

Democratic presidential primary preference items were asked of those who said they will vote in the Democratic primary in April. That sample size is 358, with a margin of error of +/- 6.3 percentage points.

Democratic presidential primary candidates

With less than a month remaining until the Iowa caucuses, the top four Democratic primary candidates in Wisconsin remain former Vice President Joe Biden, Sen. Bernie Sanders, Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Among those who say they will vote in the Democratic presidential primary in April, Biden is the first choice of 23 percent, followed by Sanders at 19 percent, Buttigieg at 15 percent, and Warren at 14 percent. Michael Bloomberg and Andrew Yang are the first choice of 6 percent each.

The complete results for the Democratic primary are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: First and second choice in Democratic primary (among Democratic primary voters).

Response	First Choice	Second Choice
Joe Biden	23	18
Bernie Sanders	19	18
Pete Buttigieg	15	6
Elizabeth Warren	14	21
Michael Bloomberg	6	7
Andrew Yang	6	3
Amy Klobuchar	4	6
Tulsi Gabbard	1	1
Tom Steyer	1	3
Cory Booker	1	3
Marianne Williamson	0	0
Deval Patrick	0	0
Someone else	1	1
Don't know	9	8

Three-fifths of Democratic primary voters, 60 percent, say they might change their minds about their primary choice, while 38 percent say their minds are made up.

Among the Democratic primary sample, favorability of candidates is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Favorability ratings of six candidates among Democratic primary sample

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know
Joe Biden	68	24	6	2
Bernie Sanders	67	22	7	3
Elizabeth Warren	62	20	16	2
Pete Buttigieg	47	12	36	5
Andrew Yang	31	11	51	5
Michael Bloomberg	31	27	37	5

General election matchups

General election matchups between Trump and four Democratic candidates all indicate very close races.

A summary of the general election results for January is shown in Table 4. For comparison, the December results are shown in Table 5 and the November results in Table 6.

Table 4: January General Election Matchups

Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct
Joe Biden	49	Bernie Sanders	47	Elizabeth Warren	45	Pete Buttigieg	44
Donald Trump	45	Donald Trump	46	Donald Trump	48	Donald Trump	46
Neither	4	Neither	4	Neither	4	Neither	4
Don't know	3	Don't know	3	Don't know	3	Don't know	5

Table 5: December General Election Matchups

Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct
Joe Biden	47	Bernie Sanders	45	Elizabeth Warren	44	Pete Buttigieg	43
Donald Trump	46	Donald Trump	47	Donald Trump	45	Donald Trump	44
Neither	3	Neither	4	Neither	5	Neither	4
Don't know	3	Don't know	3	Don't know	4	Don't know	7

Table 6: November General Election Matchups

Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct	Matchup	Pct
Joe Biden	44	Bernie Sanders	45	Elizabeth Warren	43	Pete Buttigieg	39
Donald Trump	47	Donald Trump	48	Donald Trump	48	Donald Trump	47
Neither	5	Neither	5	Neither	4	Neither	6
Don't know	2	Don't know	2	Don't know	4	Don't know	7

Trump Job Approval

Forty-eight percent approve of the job Trump is doing as president, with 49 percent disapproving. That is little changed from December, when 47 percent approved and 50 percent disapproved. This is the first time Trump's disapproval has fallen below 50 percent in the Marquette Law School Poll since March 2017 when 47 percent disapproved.

Trump's job approval trend is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Trump job approval trend

	Approve	Disapprove
1/16-20/19	44	52
4/3-7/19	46	52
8/25-29/19	45	53
10/13-17/19	46	51
11/13-17/19	47	51
12/3-8/19	47	50
1/8-12/20	48	49

Trump's job approval is high among Republicans, is low among Democrats, and is split among independents as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Trump job approval by party identification

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
Republican	92	8	0
Lean Republican	78	21	1
Independent	44	43	8
Lean Democrat	10	86	4
Democrat	8	91	1

Fifty-five percent of those polled approve of Trump’s handling of the economy, while 42 percent disapprove. In December, 53 percent approved and 45 percent disapproved.

The trend in approval or disapproval of Trump’s handling of the economy is shown in table 9.

Table 9: Trump’s handling of the economy

	Approve	Disapprove
8/25-29/19	49	50
10/13-17/19	51	45
11/13-17/19	55	43
12/3-8/19	53	45
1/8-12/20	55	42

Opinions about impeachment

Views about Trump’s actions regarding Ukraine also changed very little following public testimony and the vote by the U.S. House of Representatives in favor of impeachment.

Forty percent say that Trump did something seriously wrong in his dealings with Ukraine, 14 percent say he did something wrong but not seriously so, and 37 percent say Trump did nothing wrong. Nine percent say they don’t know. In December, 42 percent said he did something seriously wrong, 9 percent said it was wrong but not serious, and 37 percent said he did nothing wrong.

The trend in views of Trump’s dealing with Ukraine is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Did Trump do something wrong in his dealing with Ukraine, by survey dates

	Seriously wrong	Wrong but not seriously	Did nothing wrong	Don’t know
11/13-17/19	42	9	38	11
12/3-8/19	42	9	37	11
1/8-12/20	40	14	37	9

Forty-seven percent approve of the House of Representatives’ vote to impeach Trump, while 49 percent disapprove and 3 percent say they don’t know.

Asked about the upcoming Senate trial, 44 percent say the Senate should convict Trump and remove him from office, while 49 percent say the Senate should acquit him of the charges. Six percent say they don’t know.

In December, prior to the House impeachment vote, a different question asked if Trump should be impeached and removed from office or not. Forty percent said he should be impeached and removed, 52 percent said he should not be, and 6 percent said they did not know.

National policy issues

Just over four in 10 respondents, 41 percent, say that global warming will cause a great deal of harm to people in the United States, with 21 percent saying it will cause a moderate amount of harm. Sixteen percent say it will cause only a little harm and 19 percent say it will cause no harm at all, while 2 percent say they don't know.

Thirty-five percent say that the number of legal immigrants into the United States should be increased, 41 percent say it should remain the same and 20 percent say it should be reduced. Four percent say they don't know.

Over one-third of respondents, 37 percent, say that tariffs hurt the U.S. economy, while 32 percent say tariffs help the economy, 24 percent say they don't make any difference, and 7 percent say they don't know. The trend in views of tariffs is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Effect of tariffs on the economy, by survey dates

	Helps U.S. economy	Hurts U.S. economy	Doesn't make much difference	Don't know
8/25-29/19	30	46	17	6
10/13-17/19	33	41	17	8
1/8-12/20	32	37	24	7

Twenty-six percent believe the U.S. and North Korea will reach an agreement on reducing nuclear weapons in the next year or two, with 65 percent saying they don't think an agreement will be reached and 9 percent saying they don't know. In October, 24 percent thought an agreement would be reached and 66 percent thought it would not.

Cynicism about government

Almost half, 48 percent, strongly agree that the government is run by a few big interests and 32 percent say they somewhat agree. Thirteen percent somewhat disagree and 6 strongly disagree. The trend in this view of the government is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Government is run by big interest, by survey dates

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
7/15-18/13	47	32	13	6	2
5/15-18/14	51	31	11	5	1
11/12-15/15	55	29	9	6	2
1/8-12/20	48	32	13	6	2

About two-thirds, 64 percent, strongly agree that the government wastes a lot of money collected in taxes, with 24 percent somewhat agreeing, 8 percent somewhat disagreeing, and 2 percent strongly disagreeing. The trend in this question is shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Government wastes tax money, by survey dates

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
7/15-18/13	64	23	8	4	1
5/15-18/14	69	21	7	2	1
1/8-12/20	64	24	8	2	2

More than half of respondents say you can't trust the government to do what is right, with 26 percent saying they strongly agree and 38 percent saying they somewhat agree. Twenty-three percent say they somewhat disagree and 9 percent strongly disagree. The trend for this question is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Can't trust government to do the right thing, by survey dates

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
7/15-18/13	31	32	22	12	3
5/15-18/14	32	35	19	9	4
1/8-12/20	26	38	23	9	4

Asked about the FBI, 33 percent say they have a great deal of confidence in the FBI, 39 percent have some confidence, 18 percent have only a little, and 8 percent say they have no confidence at all. This trend is shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Confidence in the FBI, by survey dates

	A great deal	Some	Only a little	No confidence at all	Don't know
6/13-17/18	34	34	17	13	2
10/13-17/19	33	38	17	10	2
1/8-12/20	33	39	18	8	2

Racial prejudice

One-third of respondents, 34 percent, say that racial prejudice against black people is a very serious problem, with 38 percent saying it is somewhat serious. Seventeen percent say it is a not so serious problem and 9 percent say it is not a problem at all.

Prejudice against Hispanic or Latino people is seen as a very serious problem by 29 percent, as a somewhat serious problem by 36 percent, as a not so serious problem by 19 percent, and as not a problem at all by 12 percent.

State issues

Thirty-five percent say that Foxconn will be worth the money the state provides in incentives to the company, while 46 percent say the state is paying more than the plant is worth and 19 percent say they don't know. There have been only modest shifts in views of Foxconn since the project was announced, as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Will Foxconn be worth the cost, by survey dates

	Will provide as much or more benefit	State is paying more than the plant is worth	Don't know
2/25-3/1/18	38	49	13
6/13-17/18	40	46	13
7/11-15/18	39	46	14
8/15-19/18	41	44	15
9/12-16/18	39	48	13
10/3-7/18	38	48	13
10/24-28/18	41	40	18
4/3-7/19	41	47	11
1/8-12/20	35	46	19

A majority of respondents are very satisfied (15 percent) or satisfied (44 percent) with the public schools in their community, while 22 percent say they are dissatisfied and 11 percent are very dissatisfied. The percentage of those very satisfied has declined from 23 percent in 2012, while those dissatisfied have increased from 17 percent, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Satisfaction with public schools, by survey dates

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
4/26-29/12	23	43	17	10	4
5/9-12/12	23	44	18	7	5
5/23-26/12	23	48	17	7	4
4/7-10/15	25	50	16	5	2
3/13-16/17	25	49	14	6	4
9/12-16/18	18	46	17	8	6
1/8-12/20	15	44	22	11	6

More than half, 55 percent, say it is more important to increase spending on public schools than it is to reduce property taxes, while 41 percent say reducing property taxes is more important. Since 2013, support for increased school spending peaked in early 2018, while support for cutting property taxes was at its height in early 2013, as shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Which is more important, cut property taxes or increase school spending, by survey dates

	Reducing property taxes	Increasing spending on public schools	Don't know
3/11-13/13	49	46	4
5/6-9/13	49	46	4
4/7-10/15	40	54	5
2/25-3/1/18	33	63	3
6/13-17/18	35	59	5
8/15-19/18	32	61	5
9/12-16/18	38	57	5
10/3-7/18	37	57	6
10/24-28/18	40	55	4
1/16-20/19	39	55	6
1/8-12/20	41	55	4

Over two-thirds of respondents, 70 percent, favor “Wisconsin’s current law allowing residents to obtain a license to carry concealed handguns,” while 25 percent oppose it. When previously asked in January 2016, 63 percent favored and 31 percent opposed the law.

In 2012, shortly after the state’s current law went into effect in late 2011, a question with a different wording showed a much more narrow division. That question asked, “Do you favor or oppose legalizing possession of concealed weapons?” Responses to that question are shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Favor or oppose legalizing concealed weapons, by survey dates

	Favor	Oppose	Don't know
1/19-22/12	46	51	3
4/26-29/12	47	50	3
5/23-26/12	47	49	3

Economic outlook and issues

Wisconsin registered voters hold a positive view of the performance of the economy over the past 12 months, with 48 percent saying the economy has improved over the past year, 17 percent saying it has worsened, and 33 percent saying it has stayed the same. The trend in economic evaluations of the past year is shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Economic evaluation of past year, trend

	Gotten better	Gotten worse	Stayed the same
1/16-20/19	42	20	34
4/3-7/19	42	19	37
8/25-29/19	37	25	34
10/13-17/19	41	20	36
11/13-17/19	42	18	37
12/3-8/19	44	21	34
1/8-12/20	48	17	33

Looking ahead to the next year, 33 percent say the economy will improve, while 23 percent think it will get worse and 37 percent say the economy will remain the same. The trend in economic outlook is shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Economic outlook for next year, trend

	Get better	Get worse	Stay the same
1/16-20/19	29	34	30
4/3-7/19	34	27	34
8/25-29/19	26	37	33
10/13-17/19	25	30	39
11/13-17/19	35	24	37
12/3-8/19	32	25	37
1/8-12/20	33	23	37

Evaluation of state elected officials

Gov. Tony Evers' job approval stands at 51 percent, with disapproval at 40 percent. Nine percent say they don't have an opinion. In December, 50 percent approved, while 38 percent disapproved. The trend in job approval of the governor is shown in Table 22.

In January, 46 percent say the state is headed in the right direction, while 47 percent say it has gotten off on the wrong track. This is a shift from 2019 when a majority said the state was headed in the right direction, as shown in Table 23.

Table 22: Evers' job performance, trend

	Approve	Disapprove
1/16-20/19	39	22
4/3-7/19	47	37
8/25-29/19	54	34
10/13-17/19	52	34
11/13-17/19	47	42
12/3-8/19	50	38
1/8-12/20	51	40

Table 23: State headed in right direction or on wrong track, trend

	Right direction	Wrong track
1/16-20/19	57	33
4/3-7/19	52	40
8/25-29/19	55	37
10/13-17/19	53	39
1/8-12/20	46	47

Table 24 presents the favorability ratings of elected officials in Wisconsin and the percentage of respondents who haven't heard enough or say they don't know.

Table 24: Favorability ratings of governor and senators

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know
Tony Evers	45	37	14	3
Tammy Baldwin	44	40	13	2
Ron Johnson	39	29	28	3

About the Marquette Law School Poll

The Marquette Law School Poll is the most extensive statewide polling project in Wisconsin history. This poll interviewed 800 registered Wisconsin voters by landline or cell phone Jan. 8-12, 2020. The margin of error is +/-4.1 percentage points for the full sample.

The Democratic presidential candidate preference items were asked of Democrats, independents who lean Democratic, and independents who do not lean to either party. That sample size is 358 with a margin of error of +/- 6.3 percentage points.

Four questions were asked of half the sample (Form A) and four were asked of the other half-sample (Form B). Questions on Form A have a sample size of 400 and a margin of error of +/- 5.7 percentage points. Questions on Form B have a sample size of 400 and a margin of error of +/- 5.8 percentage points.

Form A questions were right direction or wrong track for the state, satisfaction with public schools, concealed carry, and Foxconn. Form B questions were the effect of global warming, legal immigration, the effect of tariffs on the economy, and whether the United States and North Korea will agree to limits on nuclear arms.

The partisan makeup of the sample, including those who lean to a party, is 47 percent Republican, 43 percent Democratic and 9 percent independent. The partisan makeup of the sample, excluding those who lean to a party, is 28 percent Republican, 26 percent Democratic, and 44 percent independent.

Since January 2017, the long-term partisan balance, including those who lean to a party, in the Marquette Law School Poll has been 45 percent Republican and 44 percent Democratic, with 9 percent independent. Partisanship, excluding those who lean, has been 30 percent Republican and 28 percent Democratic, with 41 percent independent.

The entire questionnaire, methodology statement, full results and breakdowns by demographic groups are available at law.marquette.edu/poll/results-and-data.

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