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This release is also available online.

New Marquette Law School Wisconsin survey finds Barnes with 7-point lead over Johnson in U.S. Senate race, Evers ahead of Michels by 2 points in the race for governor, and Biden approval rating unchanged

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

MILWAUKEE – A new Marquette Law School Poll survey of Wisconsin finds a close race for governor and Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes with a 7-percentage-point lead in the race for U.S. Senate.

In the governor’s race, 45% support Democratic incumbent Gov. Tony Evers and 43% favor Republican Tim Michels. The independent candidate, Joan Beglinger, is chosen by 7%, with 3% saying they don’t know and 2% who declined to answer. These responses include those who are undecided but who say they lean toward supporting a candidate. In June, 48% supported Evers and 41% favored Michels.

[Table 1](#) shows the vote preference for governor among registered voters since June. Beglinger was not included in the June survey. (All results in the tables are stated as percentages; the precise wording of the questions can be found in the online link noted above.)

Table 1: Vote for Wisconsin governor among registered voters

Poll dates	Evers	Michels	Beglinger	Other	Don’t know	Refused
8/10-15/22	45	43	7	0	3	2
6/14-20/22	48	41	NA	2	8	2

In the race for U.S. Senate, Democrat Mandela Barnes is supported by 51% and incumbent Republican Sen. Ron Johnson is the choice of 44%, while 1% say “neither,” 3% say they don’t know and 1% decline to answer. Vote preference includes those who say they are undecided but who say they lean toward a candidate. In the June poll, 46% preferred Barnes and 44% chose Johnson.

[Table 2](#) shows the trend in support for the Senate candidates among registered voters since June.

Table 2: Vote for U.S. Senate among registered voters

Poll dates	Barnes	Johnson	Neither	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	51	44	1	3	1
6/14-20/22	46	44	1	7	2

The survey was conducted Aug. 10-15, 2022, interviewing 811 Wisconsin registered voters, with a margin of error of +/-4.2 percentage points.

Partisan support for the candidates in the race for governor is shown in [Table 3](#). Both Democratic and Republican voters are strongly unified behind their respective party's candidates, with 91% of Democrats supporting Evers and 89% of Republicans supporting Michels. Forty-one percent of independents back Evers, while 37% prefer Michels. The independent candidate, Beglinger, receives 12% from independent voters and 4% from Republicans and 3% from Democrats.

Table 3: Vote for governor among registered voters, by party identification

(a) August

Party ID	Evers	Michels	Beglinger	Other	Don't know	Refused
Republican	6	89	4	0	1	0
Independent	41	37	12	0	7	2
Democrat	91	4	3	0	1	1

(b) June

Party ID	Evers	Michels	Other	Don't know	Refused
Republican	5	86	1	7	1
Independent	49	35	3	11	2
Democrat	95	2	0	2	0

Partisan support for the U.S. Senate candidates is shown in [Table 4](#). As in the governor's race, partisans are well aligned with their party's candidates, with 95% of Democrats supporting Barnes and 92% of Republicans supporting Johnson. Fifty-two percent of independents back Barnes, while 38% prefer Johnson.

Table 4: Vote for U.S. Senate among registered voters, by party identification

(a) August

Party ID	Barnes	Johnson	Neither	Don't know	Refused
Republican	7	92	0	1	1
Independent	52	38	2	5	2
Democrat	95	4	0	1	1

(b) June

Party ID	Barnes	Johnson	Neither	Don't know	Refused
Republican	6	89	0	4	0
Independent	41	41	3	13	3
Democrat	95	2	0	3	0

Among Republicans, 83% say they are absolutely certain to vote in November's elections, as do 82% of Democrats and 66% of independents. Certainty of voting by party is shown in [Table 5](#). Registered voters were asked, "Are you absolutely certain to vote, very likely to vote, are the chances 50-50, or don't you think you will vote?"

Table 5: What are the chances that you will vote in the November 2022 general election for governor, Congress, and other offices?

(a) August

Party ID	Absolutely certain	Very likely	50-50	Will not vote	Don't know
Republican	83	11	4	2	0
Independent	66	16	14	3	0
Democrat	82	8	5	5	0

The effect of the different levels of voter turnout on vote for governor is shown in [Table 6](#). The first row shows preference among all registered voters, with the second row showing the results for an electorate composed of those either "absolutely certain" to vote or "very likely" to vote. The third row shows the results among only the most likely voters—those who say they are absolutely certain to vote.

Table 6: Vote for governor, by certainty of voting

How likely to vote	Evers	Michels	Beglinger	Other	Don't know
All registered voters	45	43	7	0	3
Certain or very likely to vote	46	44	5	0	2
Only those certain to vote	48	44	4	0	2

[Table 7](#) shows the vote for U.S. Senate by certainty of voting.

Table 7: Vote for U.S. Senate, by certainty of voting

How likely to vote	Barnes	Johnson	Neither	Don't know
All registered voters	51	44	1	3
Certain or very likely to vote	52	45	0	2
Only those certain to vote	52	45	0	1

Perceived candidate traits

[Table 8](#) shows the perception of the trait that candidates “care about people like you.” Beglinger was not included in the traits battery of questions in this survey.

The relative lack of familiarity with the non-incumbent candidates, Michels and Barnes, is evident in the higher percentages that say they “don’t know” about them, compared to the two incumbents, Evers and Johnson.

Table 8: For each of the following candidates, would you say they are someone who cares about people like you, or don't they care about people like you?

Candidate	Cares	Doesn't care	Don't know
Evers	54	38	9
Michels	38	38	23
Barnes	50	27	23
Johnson	41	49	10

[Table 9](#) shows the perception of the trait that candidates “share my values.” As with the previous table, the non-incumbents, Michels and Barnes, have higher rates of “don’t know” responses on these items.

Table 9: For each of the following candidates, would you say they are someone who shares your values or don't they share your values?

Candidate	Shares values	Doesn't share values	Don't know
Evers	50	41	9
Michels	38	38	23
Barnes	45	31	24
Johnson	40	50	10

[Table 10](#) shows the favorable and unfavorable ratings of the candidates since June, along with those who say they haven’t heard enough or don’t know. Beglinger was not included in this battery of items.

The non-incumbents have become substantially better known following their primary victories on Aug. 9, though they remain much less well known than the incumbents.

Table 10: Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of [INSERT NAME] or haven't you heard enough about them yet?

(a) Evers

Poll dates	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	46	41	6	6	0
6/14-20/22	44	42	11	2	0

(b) Michels

Poll dates	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	33	33	24	10	0
6/14-20/22	22	22	51	5	0

(c) Barnes

Poll dates	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	37	22	30	11	0
6/14-20/22	21	16	57	6	0

(d) Johnson

Poll dates	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	38	47	9	6	0
6/14-20/22	37	46	14	2	0

Evers' job approval

Table 11 shows approval of how Evers has handled his job as governor since February 2022. In a series of four polls beginning in February, Evers' net approval has declined from +9 to +2 in August.

Table 11: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Tony Evers is handling his job as Governor of Wisconsin?

Poll dates	Net approval	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	2	47	45	8	1
6/14-20/22	3	48	45	6	1
4/19-24/22	6	49	43	7	1
2/22-27/22	9	50	41	8	1

Importance of issues

In each survey by the Marquette Law School Poll since August 2021, respondents have been asked to rate how concerned they are with a variety of issues. [Table 12](#) shows the concern with nine issues in the current survey, sorted from highest to lowest percentage saying they are “very concerned.”

Table 12: How concerned are you about each of the following? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned with ...

Issue	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned
Inflation	67	27	4	0
Gun violence	61	26	6	5
Crime	58	30	9	2
Abortion policy	55	25	8	7
Public schools	54	34	7	3
Taxes	47	38	12	3
Climate change	41	28	13	17
Illegal immigration	40	28	15	16
Coronavirus	20	35	20	25

Inflation ranks as the top issue concern, but as [Table 13](#) shows, there has been a decline in concern about this issue in August, following falling gasoline prices and a lower core rate of inflation from June to July according to the monthly consumer price index. There had been a steady rise in concern about inflation from August 2021 until June 2022.

Table 13: Concern about inflation, Aug. 2021-Aug. 2022

Poll dates	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned
8/10-15/22	67	27	4	0
6/14-20/22	75	20	4	1
4/19-24/22	69	23	6	1
2/22-27/22	68	28	3	1
10/26-31/21	64	28	6	1
8/3-8/21	49	35	11	3

Partisans differ substantially in their concern over particular issues, as shown in [Table 14](#). Panel (a) is sorted by Republican concern and panel (b) by concern among Democrats. The entries are the percentage of each partisan group who say they are “very concerned” about the issue.

Table 14: Issue concerns, percent 'very concerned,' by party identification

(a) Listed in order of concern among Republicans

Issue	Republican	Independent	Democrat
Inflation	91	67	42
Crime	80	47	53
Taxes	72	44	26
Illegal immigration	67	34	19
Public schools	60	50	53
Gun violence	45	59	77
Abortion policy	39	53	73
Coronavirus	9	15	40
Climate change	8	40	79

(b) Listed in order of concern among Democrats

Issue	Republican	Independent	Democrat
Climate change	8	40	79
Gun violence	45	59	77
Abortion policy	39	53	73
Public schools	60	50	53
Crime	80	47	53
Inflation	91	67	42
Coronavirus	9	15	40
Taxes	72	44	26
Illegal immigration	67	34	19

Abortion

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision which had meant that abortion was legal in all states. The public, both overall and in each partisan category, has heard a great deal about the June 2022 decision, as shown in [Table 15](#).

Table 15: How much have you heard or read about a recent United States Supreme Court decision on abortion?, total and by party identification

Party ID	A lot	A little	Nothing at all	Don't know
Total	79	17	3	0
Republican	76	22	2	0
Independent	78	16	5	1
Democrat	86	12	2	0

The decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* is opposed by a majority of Wisconsin registered voters, including majorities of independents and Democrats, while it is favored by a majority of Republicans in the state, as shown in [Table 16](#).

Table 16: Do you favor or oppose the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe versus Wade*, thus striking down the 1973 decision that made abortion legal in all 50 states?

Party ID	Favor	Oppose	Haven't heard of decision	Don't Know	Refused
Total	33	60	1	4	2
Republican	62	28	0	8	2
Independent	31	62	2	2	3
Democrat	5	92	0	2	1

Views of abortion policy have shifted by a few points, in favor of legal abortions, since the June 2022 Marquette Law School Poll, which was conducted before the Supreme Court's abortion decision. [Table 17](#) shows the change from June to August, overall and by party identification.

Table 17: Do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases, or illegal in all cases?

(a) Opinion in June and August

Poll dates	Legal in all cases	Legal in most cases	Illegal in most cases	Illegal in all cases	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	30	35	25	5	3	1
6/14-20/22	27	31	24	11	5	2

(b) Opinion by party identification, August

Party ID	Legal in all cases	Legal in most cases	Illegal in most cases	Illegal in all cases	Don't know	Refused
Republican	9	24	55	10	2	1
Independent	30	40	18	5	4	2
Democrat	53	41	5	1	1	0

(c) Opinion by party identification, June

Party ID	Legal in all cases	Legal in most cases	Illegal in most cases	Illegal in all cases	Don't know	Refused
Republican	8	21	43	20	6	1
Independent	30	30	23	10	5	2
Democrat	45	42	6	5	3	0

The respondents to the August survey overwhelmingly support allowing legal abortions in the case of rape or incest, with 79% or more support in each partisan group, as shown in [Table 18](#).

Table 18: Do you think Wisconsin should or should not allow a woman to obtain a legal abortion if she became pregnant as the result of rape or incest?

Party ID	Should allow	Should not allow	Don't Know	Refused
Total	88	8	4	1
Republican	79	16	4	2
Independent	87	6	5	2
Democrat	97	1	1	0

Jan. 6th and Opinion of Trump

More than half of respondents say they have heard a lot about the hearings of the House Select Committee on the events at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. [Table 19](#) shows how much respondents have heard, first among the total sample and then for each partisan group.

Table 19: How much have you heard or read about the hearings of the House Select Committee on Jan. 6th?

Party ID	A lot	A little	Nothing at all	Don't know
Total	57	27	15	1
Republican	53	32	14	1
Independent	53	28	19	0
Democrat	70	19	11	1

Views of former President Donald Trump's responsibility for violence at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, vary sharply by party identification, as shown in [Table 20](#).

Table 20: How much responsibility, if any, should Donald Trump bear for the violence of some of his supporters in the United States Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021?

Party ID	A lot	A little	Nothing at all	Don't know	Refused
Total	47	19	31	2	2
Republican	8	26	62	3	2
Independent	46	22	29	1	2
Democrat	89	7	2	2	0

Opinion on the accuracy of the results of the 2020 presidential election continues to sharply divide the public, with 66% saying they are very or somewhat confident and 32% saying they are not too confident or not at all confident in the election result. These views overall and by party identification are shown in [Table 21](#).

Table 21: How confident are you that, here in Wisconsin, the votes for president were accurately cast and counted in the 2020 election?

Party ID	Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not too confident	Not at all confident	Don't know	Refused
Total	48	18	15	17	2	1
Republican	13	24	25	37	1	0
Independent	46	21	15	13	3	1
Democrat	90	5	3	0	2	0

Among all registered voters, 38% have a favorable opinion of Trump, 57% have an unfavorable opinion of him and 5% lack an opinion or declined to answer. These views have barely changed during 2022, as shown in [Table 22](#).

Table 22: Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Donald Trump or haven't you heard enough about him yet?

Poll dates	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	38	57	1	4	0
6/14-20/22	39	56	3	2	0
4/19-24/22	36	58	2	3	1
2/22-27/22	36	57	2	3	2

[Table 23](#) shows opinion of Trump overall and by party identification in the August survey. A substantial majority of Republicans hold a favorable view of Trump, while majorities of independents and Democrats have an unfavorable opinion of him.

Table 23: Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Donald Trump or haven't you heard enough about him yet? August 2022

Party ID	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused
Total	38	57	1	4	0
Republican	77	15	2	5	1
Independent	34	62	0	4	0
Democrat	3	95	0	1	1

A majority of Wisconsin Republicans would like Trump to run for president in 2024, while a majority of independents and Democrats, and an overall majority, prefer that he not seek the presidency, as shown in [Table 24](#).

Table 24: Would you like to see Donald Trump run for president in 2024, or not?

Party ID	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
Total	29	65	5	1
Republican	59	33	7	1
Independent	26	66	6	2
Democrat	3	97	0	0

The entire survey period, which began on Aug. 10, 2022, ran after the FBI executed a search warrant at Trump's property in Mar-a-Lago, in Florida, on Aug. 8, although the survey had already been finalized and so did not specifically inquire about the development.

Other issues

Support for a requirement of paid parental leave for new parents is strong overall, with 78% in favor of requiring businesses to offer paid leave and 17% opposed. [Table 25](#) shows that majorities of each party favor such a proposal.

Table 25: Do you favor or oppose a proposal that would require businesses to provide paid family leave for mothers and fathers of new babies?

Party ID	Favor	Oppose	Don't Know	Refused
Total	78	17	5	1
Republican	65	28	4	3
Independent	79	15	6	0
Democrat	90	6	4	0

A majority, 69%, favor legalization of marijuana, while 23% are opposed. [Table 26](#) shows opinion overall and by party.

Table 26: Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal, or not?

Party ID	Yes, legal	No, illegal	Don't Know	Refused
Total	69	23	8	0
Republican	51	39	10	0
Independent	75	20	4	0
Democrat	81	10	8	1

Forty-three percent of registered voters say it is more important to reduce property taxes, while 52% say it is more important to increase spending on public schools. When last asked in April 2022, 46% said reduce property taxes and 50% said increase spending on public schools. [Table 27](#) shows the partisan divide on support for property tax cuts vs. spending on schools in the August survey.

Table 27: Which is more important to you: reduce property taxes or increase spending on public schools?

Party ID	Reducing property taxes	Increasing spending on public schools	Don't know	Refused
Total	43	52	5	0
Republican	70	23	6	1
Independent	40	54	5	0
Democrat	16	80	4	0

Expanding the number of students using publicly funded vouchers to attend private schools is favored by 46% and opposed by 45%. This is little changed from a year ago, in August 2021, when 45% favored and 45% were opposed. [Table 28](#) shows how opinion on this issue differs by party identification in the current survey.

Table 28: Would you favor or oppose expanding the number of students using publicly funded vouchers to attend private schools?

Party ID	Favor expanding vouchers	Oppose expanding vouchers	Don't know
Total	46	45	9
Republican	57	35	8
Independent	51	42	8
Democrat	26	62	13

Opinion on vouchers is sensitive to the wording of the question. In the April 2022 survey, the question was phrased as “Do you favor or oppose allowing all students statewide to use publicly funded vouchers to attend private or religious schools if they wish to do so?” With that wording in April, 58% favored extending vouchers to all students, and 33% were opposed.

Other trends

A majority of respondents, 56%, think the state is off on the wrong track, while 35% say it is headed in the right direction. The trend since February is shown in [Table 29](#).

Table 29: Thinking just about the state of Wisconsin, do you feel things in Wisconsin are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten off on the wrong track?

Poll dates	Right direction	Wrong track	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	35	56	9	0
6/14-20/22	37	56	6	0
4/19-24/22	36	56	7	0
2/22-27/22	39	53	8	1

In August, 40% approve of the way President Joe Biden is handling his job, while 55% disapprove. In June, 40% approved and 57% disapproved. The trend in Biden approval in 2022 is shown in [Table 30](#).

Table 30: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as president?

Poll dates	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	40	55	5	1
6/14-20/22	40	57	3	0
4/19-24/22	43	53	3	1
2/22-27/22	43	52	3	2

Sen. Tammy Baldwin is seen favorably by 39% and unfavorably by 37%. The trend in views of Baldwin is shown in [Table 31](#).

Table 31: Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Tammy Baldwin or haven't you heard enough about her yet?

Poll dates	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused
8/10-15/22	39	37	18	6	0
6/14-20/22	39	37	20	3	1
4/19-24/22	43	36	17	3	0
2/22-27/22	42	36	18	3	1

About the Marquette Law School Poll

The Marquette Law School Poll is the most extensive statewide polling project in Wisconsin history. This poll interviewed 811 registered Wisconsin voters by landline or cell phone, Aug. 10-15, 2022. The margin of error is +/-4.2 percentage points for the full sample.

Some issue items were asked of half the sample. Those on Form A were asked of 409 and have a margin of error of +/-6 percentage points. Form B items were asked of 402 and have a margin of error of +/-6 percentage points.

Items asked of half-samples on Form A include concern about public schools, inflation, abortion policy, taxes, gun violence, and crime. Form B asked concern about the coronavirus pandemic, illegal immigration, and climate change. Form B also included items on legalization of marijuana, property taxes and school spending, and expansion of school vouchers.

The partisan makeup of the sample, including those who lean to a party, is 45% Republican, 44% Democratic, and 9% independent. The partisan makeup of the sample, excluding those who lean to a party, is 30% Republican, 29% Democratic, and 41% independent.

Since January 2020, the long-term partisan balance, including those who lean to a party, in the Marquette poll has been 45% Republican and 44 % Democratic, with 9% independent. Partisanship excluding those who lean has been 30% Republican and 28% Democratic, with 41% 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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