



Badger Poll™ #6, Release #5  
University of Wisconsin Survey Center  
University of Wisconsin Madison  
March 2, 2003

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RATINGS OF OFFICEHOLDERS  
by G. Donald Ferree, Jr.

Congress as an institution fares less well than the President in the public's esteem. Overall, just under four in ten rate Congress as doing an excellent (1%) or good (37%) job. This compares to the almost six in ten choosing either fair (45%) or poor (12%). Thus, while half again as many residents grade Bush "good" or above as call him "fair" or worse, the opposite is true for Congress.

This does not tell the whole story, however, as ratings for Congress as a body tend to cluster more in the "middle" (that is, either good or poor), than at either "extreme" (that is, either excellent or poor).

Despite the fact that Congress as a body (in both houses) comes close to being split between the two parties, there seems to be something of a partisan coloring to views of Congress. Thus, one third of self-described Republicans rate Congress as good or better (52%), while among Democrats the comparable figure is 35%. Self-described Independents look rather like Democrats in this regard.

Going along with this, there is something of a tendency for higher ratings of Bush to go along with higher ratings of Congress as a body. For instance, ignoring those who fail to assign a grade to either or both, the proportion ratings Congress as excellent or good, begins at two thirds (68%) among those rating Bush as excellent, but declines to half (49%) among those calling the President's job handling good. Moving further down the scale of Bush grades is echoed in views of Congress. Among those calling Bush "fair", only one quarter (26%) rated Congress good or better, while for those who think Bush is doing a poor job the comparable proportion is 10%.

Besides being asked about "Congress", respondents were also queried about both incumbent US Senators. Overall, answers are similar, and reflect the tendency often seen around the country to rate the individual member of a legislative body as better than the chamber to which he or she has been elected. This is often also mirrored in comparisons of individuals to the group to which they belong, e.g. my son's teacher compared to teachers overall.

Senior Senator Herb Kohl is viewed as good or better by just under half of all residents (excellent 6%, good 40%). Just over one third choose a lower score (30% fair, 7% good). Overall, this makes the balance of views less positive than is the case for Bush, but more positive than was the case for Congress overall. But it is noteworthy that one in six (17%) did not rate him at all.

Women, who also viewed Congress more favorably, are more disposed to rate Kohl high than men are. There is also a partisan pattern, which reverses what was found for Congress as a whole. Six in ten self described Democrats call Kohl's job handling good or better, compared to one in four who choose a lower rating. Independent's views tend to be in rough balance, while GOP adherents are much more critical. Overall, among Republicans, one in three rate Kohl as good or excellent, compared with almost half who say he is doing a fair or poor job.

Bush and Kohl ratings do not relate to one another all that strongly. To be sure, the proportion calling Kohl either good or excellent starts out at 47% among those rating both men, and rises a bit (to 62%) among those grading Bush as good. Moving from good to fair, however, in one's views of Bush, leaves almost as many (57%) labelling Kohl as good or better. It falls off again (to 48%) among those saying Bush is doing a poor job. But this is not a clear trend at all.

The relationship between one's view of Congress and one's appreciation of Herb Kohl seems clearer. Thus, two thirds of those rating Congress as good or better also rate Kohl that high (there are too few rating Congress as excellent to look at that group separately). The proportion rating Kohl as at least good drops to 49% among those calling Congress fair, and to 38% among those who say it is poor.

What of the Junior Senator, who next comes up for re-election (in 2004)? Overall, his job ratings look like Kohl's and thus better than Congress but worse than the President. Specifically, just under half rate Russ Feingold as excellent (8%) or good (40%), compared with under four in ten who opt for fair (27%) or poor (10%). As was the case for Kohl, a relatively large group (one in six or 16%) do not rate him.

Gender patterns are similar for the two men, Feingold, like Kohl stands higher in the views of his fellow partisans than among those on the other side of the aisle. Indeed, while differences are small, Democrats seem at least as positive to Feingold as to Kohl, while Republicans are slightly more critical of the Junior Senator than of his Senior colleague, so there is a modestly greater partisan divide over Feingold as opposed to Kohl.

Among those calling Bush's performance excellent, just under half (48%) rate Feingold as good or better. This increases some to 57% among those who are less enthusiastic about the Chief Executive and rate HIM as (only) good. Moving down the Bush ladder, among those calling him fair, 62% rate Feingold as good or better, so for these three categories, increasingly critical views of Bush go along with more positive rankings of Feingold. This weak trend, however, is obscured among those calling Bush poor, where 56% see the Junior Senator as doing at least a good job.

Some 62% of those rating Congress as a whole as either good or excellent choose one of those ratings for Feingold as well. This drops slightly to 55% among those rating Congress as fair, and 37% among those calling it poor. So those who are most critical of Congress tend relatively to be more critical of Feingold, although this relationship is scarcely strong.

Overall ratings of both Senators were very similar, but this does not necessarily mean that individuals view them the same. As it happens, however, for each category of Kohl rating (from excellent to poor), a majority (ranging from somewhat over half to eight in ten) gives Feingold the same exact rating. Looked at a bit differently, twice as many use the same rating for both men as

differ. Using the same kind of measure discussed above, the proportion rating Feingold as good or better declines steadily as one moves down the Kohl rating ladder (96% of those calling Kohl excellent, 78% of those calling it good, 31% saying it is fair, and 8% among those labeling the Senior Senator as poor).

Respondents on this survey were also asked to rate Governor Doyle, which was commented on earlier in connection to the state budget issues. Not surprisingly, since he is at the start of his term, fewer were willing to rate him (almost three in ten either volunteered that it was still too early to tell or otherwise failed to choose a rating). Among those who did, excellent (5%) and good (34%) grades outnumbered the lower ratings of fair (27%) or poor (5%) by about five to four. This puts him just behind both Senators and ahead of Congress, but slightly behind Bush (for whom the two top grades outnumbered the two lower ones by almost three to two).

Doyle shows a somewhat clearer partisan pattern than either Senator, and one almost as strong as Bush (but in the opposite direction). If one compares the specific job ratings, interestingly, there is not a clear tendency for higher Bush ratings to go with either higher or lower Doyle ratings. Thus, the proportion rating Doyle good or better ranges only from 50% to 60% among the four groups defined by Bush ratings, a very small difference. (If one looked at it the other way, the proportion rating Bush as excellent or good for the four levels of Doyle rating, the same general pattern (or lack thereof) emerges.

One can predict Doyle ratings from the grades given to Kohl better than from those given to Feingold. Again using the proportion calling Doyle either good or excellent among those rating both men, the proportion rating Doyle relatively high begins at 75% among those calling Kohl excellent, declines to 66% and 44% for the next two categories and reaches its low of 37% among those calling Kohl's job performance poor.

The situation is a bit more murky starting with Feingold rating. Among those rating HIM excellent, seven in ten (69%) call Doyle at least good, but this proportion essentially does not change (it stands at 70%) if one's rating of Feingold is good. The lowest rating of Doyle (34% good or better) is found among those calling Feingold fair, while it moves back up again modestly (43%) for those saying Feingold is doing a poor job.

Finally, one should note that much attention has been focused on international politics, particularly the war on terror and the question of possible war against Iraq over the past months. It is not that no attention has been paid to anything else -- the economy has come in for attention, for instance, But the amount of space in news coverage for things NOT related directly to Bush's handling of the US role in the world and/or his economic policies at the national level, and the state's budgetary difficulties closer to home has not left all that much "room" for attention to other personalities and institutions. This may help to account for the relatively high number of people who failed to rate either Senator, and the weak patterns tying views of them to other figures.

## Statewide Marginals and Percentages for Key Groups

What follows is the exact question wording for each of the items referred to in the release. All results shown are for the basic sample of state residents. The first column is the percentage of the entire sample giving each response. The second and third reports the percentages for men and women separately. The fourth, fifth, and sixth columns show self-described Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Columns seven through ten group respondents by age.

Q01. INTERVIEWER: (DO NOT ASK) Enter respondent's gender

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MALE	49%	100%	--%	40%	52%	55%	48%	53%	48%	44%
FEMALE	51	--	100	61	48	45	52	47	52	56

Q02. How would you rate the job George W. Bush is doing as President?  
Excellent, good, fair or poor?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	19%	22%	16%	7%	13%	40%	18%	19%	21%	16%
GOOD	39	40	39	28	31	55	32	46	38	35
FAIR	25	23	26	35	33	4	38	22	21	27
POOR	16	15	17	28	22	2	12	12	18	20
TOO SOON TO TELL (VOL.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	1	1	1	2	*	--	--	--	1	2
REFUSED	1	--	1	--	--	--	--	1	1	--

RATE03. How would you rate the job the US Congress is doing? Excellent, good, fair, or poor?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	1%	1%	1%	2%	--%	2%	3%	*%	1%	3%
GOOD	37	33	41	33	29	50	43	43	35	31
FAIR	45	48	42	47	52	36	46	42	44	49
POOR	12	15	9	13	16	10	6	9	15	14
DON'T KNOW	5	3	7	5	3	2	3	6	5	3
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	--	--	--	1	--	--

RATE04. How would you rate the job Herb Kohl is doing as Senator from Wisconsin? (PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	6%	5%	7%	11%	3%	6%	2%	6%	5%	10%
GOOD	40	34	46	48	42	29	37	38	43	40
FAIR	30	35	25	23	36	30	41	26	27	34
POOR	7	10	5	1	6	16	3	8	8	9
DON'T KNOW	16	15	16	17	13	17	17	22	16	5
REFUSED	1	1	2	--	--	2	--	1	2	1

RATE05. How about the job Russ Feingold is doing as US Senator from Wisconsin?  
(PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY).

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	8%	8%	8%	13%	11%	3%	5%	9%	6%	11%
GOOD	40	36	44	48	39	32	33	40	41	40
FAIR	27	29	25	19	28	32	39	24	26	26
POOR	10	15	7	2	8	21	7	10	13	10
DON'T KNOW	15	13	16	18	13	12	16	17	14	11
REFUSED	1	--	1	*	--	1	--	1	--	2

Q04. How would you rate the job Jim Doyle is doing as Governor of Wisconsin?  
Excellent, good, fair or poor?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	5%	5%	4%	10%	4%	2%	--%	4%	5%	9%
GOOD	34	32	37	46	28	29	40	37	28	39
FAIR	27	22	32	14	35	34	30	32	28	17
POOR	5	7	4	4	6	7	10	6	3	7
TOO SOON TO TELL (VOL)	22	28	15	19	22	23	8	17	29	25
DON'T KNOW	7	6	7	8	7	5	12	5	6	3
REFUSED	*	*	*	*	--	--	--	1	--	1

QD05. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
DEMOCRAT	30%	25%	36%	100%	--%	--%	30%	28%	28%	40%
REPUBLICAN	29	33	26	--	--	100	33	31	27	28
INDEPENDENT	25	27	24	--	100	--	21	26	28	21
OTHER	9	8	9	--	--	--	7	11	10	4
NONE	5	6	4	--	--	--	5	3	7	5
DON'T KNOW	1	1	1	--	--	--	4	1	--	1
REFUSED	1	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	*	2

QD11. In what year were you born? (ENTER FOUR-DIGIT YEAR) (Calculated and grouped as below)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
18-29	14%	14%	14%	13%	12%	15%	100%	--%	--%	--%
30-44	31	33	28	28	32	33	--	100	--	--
45-59	33	33	34	31	36	30	--	--	100	--
60 and over	20	18	22	27	17	19	--	--	--	100
DK/REFUSED	3	3	3	2	4	2	--	--	--	--

\* denotes less than .5%

-- denotes 0%

## HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

This BADGER POLL™ was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center as part of its ongoing program of research designed to benefit the research community and the people of Wisconsin, under the direction of G. Donald Ferree, Jr., Associate Director for Public Opinion Research of the Center. The media sponsors of the survey are the (Madison) Capital Times, and the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. The BADGER POLL™ is intended to be a "poll of record" for the state, investigating matters of concern to Wisconsinites including politics, culture, and their daily lives, adhering to the highest standards of polling methodology and rigorous independence.

A total of 504 randomly chosen state residents were interviewed for this survey by telephone between February 11 and 19, inclusive. Telephone numbers were generated by computer in proportion to the number of adults living in each area of the state. Theoretically, results from this survey have a "margin of error" of a little over +/- 4%. This means that, had we asked every eligible resident in Wisconsin, exactly these questions at the time the survey was conducted, there is only a one in twenty chance that the answers would differ by more than that in either direction from what we report here. There could be differences because of changes in question wording, events occurring in the meantime, or any of the practical difficulties involved in taking a scientific survey. Results based on subgroups are subject to a larger "margin of error".