



Badger Poll™ #11, Release #5
University of Wisconsin Survey Center
University of Wisconsin Madison
November 11, 2003

NOTE: When using material from this release please cite the Badger Poll™ conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center, paid for by private funds at the University. The Capital Times (Madison) and the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel are the poll's media sponsors.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE STATE
by G. Donald Ferree, Jr.

In terms of overall awareness, Governor Doyle is in the same ballpark as both of the state's US Senators. Overall, just over six in ten are willing to state either a favorable (37%) or unfavorable (25%) impression of him. This is a similar awareness, but very slightly less positive balance, than Feingold's figures (41%-23%), and lag a bit behind Kohl's (50%-19%). By comparison, President Bush's ratings on a parallel question reveal far more awareness, but a somewhat more positive balance (60%-34%).

As shown in the detailed tables following this summary, men are more likely to take a position on the Governor than are women, though among those who do, women are at least as favorable to him. Both awareness and positive balance tend to rise with age (beginning from a narrowly negative split among the youngest rising to more than two to one favorable among the oldest). By a small margin, self-described Democrats are most likely to come down on one side or the other, but the real distinction is found in the balance, dropping from four to one favorable among Democrats to an even split among Independents and four to three UNfavorable among self-described Republicans.

When residents were asked explicitly (later in the questionnaire) to rate Governor Doyle's job performance, some four in ten called it either excellent (5%) or good (36%). This contrasted with the just over half who called it fair (39%) or poor (14%). Views of Doyle tend to be more tempered than is often the case, it should be noted, with three fourths using one of the two "middle" ratings, and only one in five falling either at the top or bottom of the scale.

His ratings improve (though only modestly as one moves up the age ladder. Women are very slightly more positive than men. Democrats are more likely to rate him good or better, while both Independents and Republicans are more apt to grade him no better than fair (but the latter more likely to call him poor the the former).

Doyle's ratings overall lag behind both Senators for whom the two top ratings modestly outnumber the two lower ones (Feingold: Excellent 10%, Good 38%, Fair 29%, Poor 11%; Kohl: Excellent 8%, Good 42%, Fair 31%, Poor 9%). For Bush, these two groups are in closer balance (Excellent 15%, Good 35%, Fair 27%, Poor 21%).

Questions about the Governor's job ratings are a fixture on Badger Poll™ surveys. Perceptions of Doyle now seem to have improved somewhat from the August rating and are also higher than they were in May. Prior to that point, since coming into office, the typical rating given Doyle had tended to lower from January (when respondents were asked to anticipate the job he WOULD do). On the other hand, the three ratings we have from 2002 for Doyle's predecessor tended to be at least a bit lower than Doyle now gets, particularly in March of that year.

		Ratings of Governor									
		10/03	8/03	5/03	4/03	3/03	2/03	1/03	9/02	6/02	3/02
Incumbent Governor Rating											
EXCELLENT		5%	4%	4%	4%	7%	5%	10%	5%	3%	3%
GOOD		36	30	32	33	36	34	44	29	32	23
FAIR		39	39	42	35	31	27	31	39	35	40
POOR		14	16	10	10	10	5	3	17	19	23
TOO SOON TO TELL (VOL)		3	5	5	9	10	22	n/a	2	4	4
DON'T KNOW		3	6	7	10	6	7	9	8	7	7
REFUSED		*	--	*	*	*	*	2	*	*	2
+1/03 Rating was of job Doyle was expected to do, previous were McCallum											

When respondents were asked directly to compare "to before Doyle became Governor" in terms of whether "Wisconsin is now in better shape than it was, worse shape than it was, or about as well off as it was", the largest single group, just shy of six in ten (59%), think the situation has not changed all that much. Among the third of residents who do see a difference, those who think the state is now worse off narrowly outnumber those who see it as better off (22%-12%).

Except for the fact that the oldest group is least likely on balance to see a worsening, there are few clear patterns for either age or gender. While among all three partisan groups similar proportions think things are about the same, the balance among those who do see a difference moves from narrowly positive among Democrats to about equally negative among Independents, and onesidedly so among among Republicans.

Any political impact of this, moreover is to be found in results when respondents were asked "how much of any change is due to Governor Doyle and his policies". Fewer than one in ten (8%) said "a lot". Even adding in the sizable group (45%) who said "some" accounts only for about one resident in two. On the other hand 30% gave the Governor "only a little" credit or blame and 8% "none at all". The proportion giving Doyle at least "some" of the responsibility tended to decrease as one moved from Democrat to Republican on the partisan spectrum, further limiting the political impact so far.

Parallel questions were asked during the last year of Scott McCallum's term, and are shown in the accompanying chart. The number who believed the state was about the same as before HE took office (in this case referring to Tommy Thompson's tenure) is generally comparable (a bit lower during the heat of the budget deliberations, and then almost the same as now). But the balance among those perceiving a shift one way or the other was far more negative last year, with all but a handful saying Wisconsin was worse off than it had been. On the other hand, the amount of blame accorded the Governor was, on balance, a bit lower in both March and June of last year, while September's figures were quite close to what we find this October.

	Comparative State Status Across Time			
	10/03	9/02	6/02	3/02
Compared to last Governor				
BETTER OFF NOW	12%	4%	3%	5%
WORSE OFF	22	32	31	40
SAME	59	59	59	50
DK. ETC.	6	5	5	4
REFUSED	*	5	1	1
Credit/blame to Gov.				
LOT	8%	8%	11%	11%
SOME	45	43	35%	32
ONLY A LITTLE	30	29	32%	32
NONE	8	11	13%	15
DK. ETC.	8	9	9%	9
REFUSED	*	*	1%	1

In fall of 2003, after a budget process which essentially left taxes where they were and relied on finding some new sources of revenue and large program cuts, the public tends to feel onesidedly that taxes remain too high. Some seven in ten (69%) characterized state levies this way, compared to one in four (26%) who called them "about right" and only a small handful (2%) who labelled them "too low". Except for a markedly lower proportion among the youngest calling state taxes "too high" (though still a plurality), group differences -- including on partisan lines -- are very modest.

On the other side of the state ledger, there is also resistance, although not quite so onesided, about state spending level. Overall, six in ten (59%) called it "too high", with one in four (26%) feeling it is "about right" and one in twenty (5%) saying it is "too low". Group differences are muted, with men a bit more likely than women to complain (in both directions), and the sense that spending is higher than it should be increasing very slowly for the three younger groups before it falls off again a bit among the oldest. But the lack of difference is more noteworthy than any clear pattern on age, gender, or partisan grounds.

The sense that taxes are too high has been a consistent finding across time, though the size of the group feeling this way has been both higher and lower in the past. The current level is about where it was in August and before this year's budget debate got underway in a big way. It was a bit higher in the summer and fall of 2002 than it is now, but only a bit higher.

Spending attitudes have tended to move in a somewhat narrower range (between a high of 66% and a low of 58% saying they are higher than they should be). The current results are quite similar to last August, and show little clear trend from earlier points. Of course, attitude to spending overall does not predict how one feels about any particular program, but it does reflect a general mindset and the degree to which residents would look to offsetting decreases to fund new initiatives.

While the state went through a difficult budget time this year -- the ramifications of which are perhaps still unclear to many -- it was billed as a long-term solution. The public seems skeptical of this claim, however. Overall, when respondents were asked "do you think the budget plan passed this year has more or less solved the state's fiscal problems for the moment, or are

Looking back across time, this level of skepticism is nothing new. Only once (in March) was there more than a small plurality thinking the choice was real. Often the balance was more clearly that one could avoid it. The recent trend suggests that the "base level" may now be higher, but it remains clear that the public must be convinced why "revenue enhancements" are necessary.

This sentiment also applies at the local level, indeed more strongly. There, by about a five to three (55%-38%) majority, the public doubts that a choice will have to be made between property tax hikes and service cuts. This doubting attitude is evident across age and partisan groups. There is some tendency, however, for it to decrease with age, parallel to what was seen in the question about spending choices at the state level.

None of this means the public cannot be convinced of the necessity of tax increases (or further real service cuts) if it comes to that. It does mean that the Wisconsin public does not concede the necessity of choice and must be shown, even as it is not confident that our budget difficulties are over.

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

	GENDER			PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MALE	49%	100%	--%	43%	48%	58%	53%	54%	46%	43%
FEMALE	51	--	100	57	52	42	47	46	54	57

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

	GENDER			PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	15%	18%	13%	1%	15%	37%	20%	16%	13%	14%
GOOD	35	35	35	18	36	48	36	40	33	31
FAIR	27	27	28	37	30	14	26	28	29	23
POOR	21	19	24	43	19	1	15	15	25	31
TOO SOON TO TELL (VOL)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	1	2	1	1	1	--	3	--	1	1
REFUSED	*	*	*	--	--	--	--	*	--	*

VOTE03. I'm going to read you a list of people in public life. For each of them, please tell me if you have a favorable impression of them, an unfavorable impression, or don't know enough to make up your mind. George W. Bush

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
FAVORABLE	60%	65%	54%	27%	60%	94%	66%	68%	55%	48%
UNFAVORABLE	34	29	39	64	34	5	27	27	39	44
DON'T KNOW ENOUGH	5	4	5	7	5	1	4	5	6	6
DON'T KNOW	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	1	2
REFUSED	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

VOTE05. Jim Doyle (PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
FAVORABLE	37%	40%	34%	58%	31%	28%	21%	33%	41%	48%
UNFAVORABLE	25	29	22	15	28	37	29	25	27	21
DON'T KNOW ENOUGH	36	28	43	25	38	33	48	40	30	28
DON'T KNOW	2	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	4
REFUSED	*	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	1	--

VOTE06. Russ Feingold (PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
FAVORABLE	41%	44%	38%	54%	41%	31%	30%	37%	38%	59%
UNFAVORABLE	23	31	15	12	22	39	24	26	25	15
DON'T KNOW ENOUGH	35	24	46	33	36	28	44	36	36	25
DON'T KNOW	1	1	1	1	*	1	2	--	2	1
REFUSED	*	1	--	--	--	1	--	1	--	--

VOTE07. Herb Kohl (PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
FAVORABLE	50%	53%	47%	61%	48%	40%	34%	52%	45%	65%
UNFAVORABLE	19	24	14	13	19	31	18	16	21	20
DON'T KNOW ENOUGH	30	22	38	25	33	29	48	32	32	13
DON'T KNOW	1	1	1	1	--	*	--	1	1	1
REFUSED	*	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	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	8%	10%	6%	13%	9%	4%	2%	8%	8%	14%
GOOD	42	37	46	45	36	41	32	45	40	47
FAIR	31	32	30	34	34	29	29	31	34	29
POOR	9	11	7	3	8	15	9	7	13	4
DON'T KNOW	10	10	11	5	12	11	28	10	6	7
REFUSED	*	*	--	--	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	10%	11%	9%	17%	10%	5%	5%	8%	8%	20%
GOOD	38	31	44	45	32	36	36	34	36	45
FAIR	29	31	27	27	36	26	18	35	31	26
POOR	11	13	9	4	11	21	11	12	17	3
DON'T KNOW	12	13	12	8	11	13	30	11	8	6
REFUSED	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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%	4%	5%	8%	3%	1%	--%	4%	4%	9%
GOOD	36	33	38	45	30	33	35	38	32	40
FAIR	39	40	38	37	46	39	36	38	43	35
POOR	14	17	12	8	12	22	16	13	17	10
TOO SOON TO TELL (VOL)	3	3	2	--	7	2	1	5	1	5
DON'T KNOW	3	3	4	3	2	2	12	3	1	1
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	--	--	--	--	1	--

WICMP04. Compared to before Doyle became Governor, do you think Wisconsin is
now in better shape than it was, worse shape than it was or about as well off as
it was?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
BETTER OFF THAN WAS	12%	13%	11%	19%	14%	3%	10%	9%	12%	20%
WORSE OFF THAN WAS	22	22	22	13	25	31	18	26	27	16
ABOUT AS WELL OFF	59	61	58	60	57	61	53	60	60	59
DON'T KNOW	6	4	8	7	3	6	18	5	1	5
REFUSED	*	1	--	1	--	--	--	--	1	--

WICMP05. How much of any change is due to Governor Doyle and his policies? A
lot, some, only a little, or none at all?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
A LOT	8%	9%	8%	9%	6%	8%	12%	7%	8%	9%
SOME	45	45	45	54	46	38	40	46	40	55
ONLY A LITTLE	30	30	30	24	30	34	14	32	37	27
NONE AT ALL	8	10	7	4	12	12	12	7	10	7
DON'T KNOW	8	6	10	9	5	7	23	7	4	4
REFUSED	*	1	*	1	--	1	--	1	1	--

TAX01. Right now do you think the level of state taxes in Wisconsin is too high, too low, or just about right?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
TOO HIGH	69%	68%	70%	65%	75%	71%	49%	71%	77%	71%
TOO LOW	2	3	2	3	3	1	5	*	3	2
JUST ABOUT RIGHT	26	27	25	31	21	27	42	27	21	21
DEP. WHICH TAX (VOL)	1	1	*	*	2	*	--	*	--	4
DON'T KNOW	1	1	2	2	1	1	4	1	--	2
REFUSED	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

TAX02. How about the level of state spending, is that too high, too low, or just about right?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
TOO HIGH	59%	63%	54%	55%	57%	61%	50%	55%	67%	59%
TOO LOW	5	7	2	6	1	7	11	3	3	3
JUST ABOUT RIGHT	26	24	27	28	30	24	25	33	22	21
DEP. ON PROGRAM (VOL)	3	2	4	4	3	2	--	1	5	4
DON'T KNOW	8	5	11	8	7	5	14	6	4	13
REFUSED	1	--	2	--	2	1	--	2	1	--

BUDG02X. Do you think the budget plan passed this year has more or less solved the state's fiscal problems for the moment, or are we going to be right back in the same situation next year?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MORE OR LESS SOLVED	14%	12%	16%	16%	13%	12%	20%	11%	14%	13%
SAME SIT. NEXT YEAR	74	77	71	72	74	75	64	79	73	75
MINOR TINKERING (VOL)	1	1	1	2	2	--	--	1	1	1
DON'T KNOW	12	10	13	10	11	12	17	9	12	11
REFUSED	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

BUDG02Y. In order to balance the state budget, NEXT YEAR do you think a choice will have to be made between serious service cuts and big increases in taxes, or is it possible to both maintain essential services and keep taxes down?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HAVE TO CHOOSE	43%	47%	40%	46%	43%	48%	33%	40%	48%	51%
DOESN'T HAVE TO	46	43	49	46	47	40	59	53	41	32
SOME OF EACH (VOL.)	3	4	3	1	5	4	3	2	4	5
DON'T KNOW	7	6	9	7	5	7	5	6	6	12
REFUSED	*	1	--	--	--	1	--	--	1	--

BUDG02A. How about in your local community. In order to balance the local budget, do you think a choice will have to be made between serious service cuts and big increases in taxes, or is it possible to both maintain essential services and keep property taxes down?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HAVE TO CHOOSE	38%	39%	37%	38%	42%	41%	22%	33%	43%	48%
DOESN'T HAVE TO	55	56	53	56	53	52	73	58	51	42
SOME OF EACH (VOL.)	3	4	2	2	2	4	3	4	2	3
DON'T KNOW	4	1	7	4	4	3	3	5	2	7
REFUSED	1	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	2	--

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%	27%	33%	100%	--%	--%	28%	28%	32%	33%
REPUBLICAN	30	36	25	--	--	100	41	30	25	28
INDEPENDENT	21	21	21	--	100	--	8	21	25	26
OTHER	11	10	12	--	--	--	13	10	14	6
NONE	6	6	5	--	--	--	6	9	2	4
DON'T KNOW	1	--	1	--	--	--	1	1	1	--
REFUSED	2	1	3	--	--	--	2	1	1	3

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	15%	17%	14%	14%	6%	21%	100%	--%	--%	--%
30-44	31	34	28	29	31	31	--	100	--	--
45-59	30	29	32	32	37	25	--	--	100	--
60 and over	21	18	23	23	26	20	--	--	--	100
DK/REFUSED	3	2	3	2	1	3	--	--	--	--

* 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 511 randomly chosen state residents were interviewed for this survey by telephone between October 21 and 28, 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".