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POLL: Wisconsin voters trust local officials ahead of 2024, support early & absentee voting options

To better understand Wisconsin voters' views on election processes and administration, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a statewide survey of general election voters, with an oversample of Republican voters, on behalf of Secure Democracy Foundation. Our findings, summarized below, show broad consensus across the political spectrum around election administration, voting options, and the future of Wisconsin elections.

Wisconsin voters are confident the state can administer a fair election in 2024

According to the poll, **73% of voters are confident the state of Wisconsin can administer a fair election** where everyone has the opportunity to vote and the votes are counted accurately. That confidence includes a majority of Republicans (60%), Independents (75%), Democrats (88%), voters older than 65 (80%), Milwaukee voters (72%), Madison voters (76%), and WOW (Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington) county voters (73%).

Wisconsin voters trust – and plan to make use of – early voting

The poll found that **73% of voters are confident that when Wisconsin voters vote by mail with an absentee ballot, their vote will be counted**. That confidence spans all party affiliations (57% of Republicans, 74% of Independents, and 90% of Democrats).

The poll also found that **32% of voters throughout the state plan to vote early – by mail or in person – in the 2024 presidential election**. Plans to vote early span party affiliations (23% of Republicans, 30% of Independents, and 47% of Democrats) and age groups (30% of 18-34 year olds, 27% of 35-54 year olds, 32% of 55-64 year olds, and 39% of 65+ voters).

Wisconsin voters trust local election officials & current election processes

Wisconsin voters trust their local election officials most when it comes to ensuring the fairness and accuracy of election results, according to the poll. When asked whom they trust most, 60% of Wisconsin voters named their local election officials (such as their county or municipal clerk), 26% look to state election officials; and 10% look to the State Legislature.

The poll also found that Wisconsin voters are confident in key processes led by local election officials:

- 82% think Wisconsin's system of checks and balances – in which local election officials count the votes and the supervising authority declares the winner – works.
- 89% think that absent clear and convincing proof of irregularities, state officials should declare the winner of Wisconsin elections based on the verified vote counting done by local clerks.
- 79% think the State Legislature should not be able to override the final vote count done by local clerks.

Wisconsin voters want officials to take sufficient time & use secure tabulation machines to report accurate results

The poll found that **82% of voters want election officials to take sufficient time to ensure every vote is counted accurately**, even if it takes longer, to determine the winner. That belief is held by Republicans (68%), Independents (84%), and Democrats (94%).

The poll also found that **Wisconsin voters strongly prefer the use of secure tabulation machines to count ballots over hand counts**. When asked to choose between the two options, 78% of voters said they prefer secure tabulation machines, while just 20% said they prefer hand counts. Such support for secure tabulation machines spans all party affiliations (Republican: 66%, Independent: 68%, Democrat: 90%).

Wisconsin voters show broad support for absentee voting policies

The poll found that a wide range of policies – from ballot tracking, to ballot verification, to ballot return – are strongly supported by Wisconsin voters.

- **89% of voters support expanding and strengthening Wisconsin's electronic ballot tracking system** to allow voters to receive text message notifications about the status of their absentee ballot.
- **83% of voters support allowing elections officials to contact voters to verify identity and correct honest voter mistakes**, such as a missing signature, before their absentee ballot is rejected.
- **65% of voters support access to secure and convenient drop off places for absentee ballots** which would be accessible 24 hours a day.

- **64% of voters support allowing local election officials to open, verify, and process absentee ballots before Election Day** so election results could be reported sooner.
- **51% of voters support eliminating witness requirements for absentee ballots**, given Wisconsin voters already must provide voter ID to have their vote counted.

Wisconsin voters believe voting eligibility should be restored to those leaving prison

71% of voters support restoring the voting eligibility of Wisconsin residents who have been convicted of a felony once they return to their communities and are no longer incarcerated.

[Twenty-three states](#) currently restore voting eligibility to those with past convictions upon their release from prison, including Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois. Wisconsin currently requires individuals to complete all terms of probation or parole before voting eligibility can be restored.

Methodology

These results are from a Public Opinion Strategies poll based on surveys of 500 Wisconsin likely 2024 voters, with an additional oversample of 200 likely GOP primary voters. Surveys were conducted between November 27-30, 2023 using a mixed-mode methodology of traditional live dialing and text-to-web. The survey has an overall margin of sampling error of +/- 4.38%. This [survey](#) was commissioned by Secure Democracy Foundation.

About Secure Democracy Foundation

Secure Democracy Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that produces research and analysis focused on voting and elections. We work to educate the public on how our election systems are secure and trustworthy.