

Knowledge and perceptions of Wisconsin's political leaders

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Fitzgerald is more well-known than Vos. 57% lack an opinion of the Senate President, while 67% don't know enough about the Assembly Speaker. 38% of Democrats and 30% of Republicans have an opinion about Vos. Democrats give him a net favorability rating of -28; among Republicans he is +20. The 31% of Independents who have an opinion give him a net rating of -7.

46% of Republicans have an opinion about Fitzgerald, and they rate him +32. Among the 41% of Democrats able to rate him, Fitzgerald has a -29 net rating. 41% of Independents also have an opinion about him. They give him a net score of -1.

Table 1: Fav/Unfav: Robin Vos

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused	n
Republican	25	5	57	12	0	681
Democrat	5	33	51	10	0	678
Independent	12	19	58	11	0	1020

Table 2: Fav/Unfav: Scott Fitzgerald

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused	n
Republican	39	7	44	10	0	681
Democrat	6	35	47	12	0	678
Independent	20	21	50	9	0	1020

More people have opinions about the Wisconsin Legislature as a whole. When asked whether they approve or disapprove of the job the legislature is doing, just 13% say they don't know. Overall, registered voters give the legislature a net +16 favorability rating. Among Republicans it is +55, Democrats -14, and Independents +9. It's worth pointing out that partisans don't hold uniform positions on this. 17% of Republicans *disapprove* of the legislature, and 37% of Democrats *approve* of it.

Table 3: The Wisconsin Legislature's job approval

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know	Refused	n
Republican	72	17	11	0	583
Democrat	37	51	11	1	555
Independent	47	38	14	1	830

Tony Evers is much more well-known than the legislative leaders but still less well-known than the legislature as a whole. Across all three 2019 polls just 21% of Republicans, 16% of Democrats, and 25% of Independents have lacked an opinion of his job performance. Among Republicans his net rating was -47; Democrats rated him +78; and Independents +16. By comparison, over the same period Republicans gave Donald Trump a net rating of +78, Democrats -90, and Independents -9.

Table 4: Tony Evers job approval

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know	Refused	n
Republican	16	63	21	1	681
Democrat	81	3	16	1	678
Independent	45	29	25	1	1020

Attention to politics

65% of Wisconsin's registered voters in 2019 said they pay attention to politics "most of the time." This includes 70% of Republicans, 67% of Democrats, and 62% of Independents.

Table 5: Some people seem to follow what's going on in politics most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in politics most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Most of the time	1570	65	65	65
Some of the time	546	23	23	88
Only now and then	164	7	7	95
Hardly at all	115	5	5	100
Don't know	4	0	0	100
Refused	1	0	0	100

Attention to politics obviously plays an enormous role in how much one knows about the state's politicians.

Table 6: Tony Evers job approval by attention to politics

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know	Refused	n
Most of the time	48	34	18	1	1570
Some of the time	47	29	24	1	546
Only now and then	48	23	28	1	164
Hardly at all	34	17	46	3	115
Don't know	51	0	49	0	4
Refused	0	0	100	0	1

Table 7: Robin Vos' favorability by attention to politics

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused	n
Most of the time	17	24	48	10	0	1570
Some of the time	8	11	68	12	0	546
Only now and then	4	5	76	15	1	164
Hardly at all	5	8	71	16	0	115
Don't know	0	0	49	51	0	4
Refused	0	0	100	0	0	1

Table 8: Scott Fitzgerald’s favorability by attention to politics

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven’t heard enough	Don’t know	Refused	n
Most of the time	25	25	40	10	0	1570
Some of the time	16	16	58	9	1	546
Only now and then	14	8	64	13	1	164
Hardly at all	1	8	70	22	0	115
Don’t know	21	30	49	0	0	4
Refused	0	0	0	100	0	1

Table 9: The Wisconsin Legislature’s job approval by attention to politics

	Approve	Disapprove	Don’t know	Refused	n
Most of the time	51	38	10	1	1323
Some of the time	53	33	14	1	428
Only now and then	58	19	20	3	130
Hardly at all	38	25	36	0	100
Don’t know	38	62	0	0	3
Refused	0	100	0	0	1

Democrats are more likely to approve of the legislature if they don’t pay attention to politics most of the time. Among Democrats who pay attention “most of the time” 30% approve, 61% disapprove, and 8% don’t know. But among Democrats who pay less attention to politics 49% approve, 32% disapprove, and 18% don’t know. In other words, Democrats who pay a lot of attention to politics give the legislature a rating of -31, while Democrats who don’t pay so much attention give it a +17 rating.

The same relationship is not apparent among Republicans and Independents. For these two groups a lack of attention to politics mostly translates to increased “don’t know” responses.

Table 10: The Legislature’s job approval by attention to politics among Democrats

	Approve	Disapprove	Don’t know	Refused	n
Most of the time	30	61	8	1	368
Less often	49	32	18	1	185
Don’t know	100	0	0	0	1

Table 11: The Legislature’s job approval by attention to politics among Republicans

	Approve	Disapprove	Don’t know	Refused	n
Most of the time	73	17	10	0	418
Less often	69	18	13	0	165

Table 12: The Legislature’s job approval by attention to politics among Independents

	Approve	Disapprove	Don’t know	Refused	n
Most of the time	49	39	11	1	527
Less often	44	34	20	1	301
Don’t know	0	100	0	0	2

Evers vs the Legislature

Among all registered voters, 19% approve of **both** Evers and the Legislature. 7% disapprove of both. Symmetrical amounts approve of one and disapprove of the other.

This group of roughly 1/5th of Wisconsin voters who approve of Evers *and* the Legislature is comprised of 42% Democrats, 41% Independents, and 17% Republicans.

Table 13: Evers approval (rows) vs Legislature approval (columns) (cell percentages)

	Approve	Disapprove	Don’t know	Refused
Approve	19	22	4	0
Disapprove	21	7	2	0
Don’t know	11	5	6	0
Refused	0	0	0	0

Approval by region

Knowledge of and opinions about the state’s political leaders vary around the state. Political knowledge is generally highest in the Madison area and lowest in the City of Milwaukee as well as the northern and western regions of the state.

Vos is net favorable in the Milwaukee suburbs, but he is unfavorable in the city itself as well as in Madison.

Fitzgerald enjoys net favorable ratings in the Milwaukee suburbs and Green Bay/Appleton. He is unpopular in the City of Milwaukee and the Madison region.

Evers popularity is quite widespread. His job approval is positive in all regions of the state—although it is quite close in the Milwaukee suburbs.

The legislature’s job approval is above water everywhere except Milwaukee City and the Madison region.

Table 14: Vos’ approval by region

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven’t heard enough	Don’t know	Refused	n
MKE City	7	20	58	14	1	195
Rest of MKE	21	17	51	11	0	751
msn	11	35	46	8	0	433
GB/A	14	14	59	13	0	460
Rest of state	8	12	67	12	0	561

Table 15: Fitzgerald's approval by region

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough	Don't know	Refused	n
MKE City	9	24	51	15	0	195
Rest of MKE	30	19	43	8	0	751
msn	17	36	38	8	0	433
GB/A	25	16	49	9	0	460
Rest of state	15	14	57	14	0	561

Table 16: Evers' approval by region

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know	Refused	n
MKE City	58	16	25	1	195
Rest of MKE	41	38	21	0	751
msn	58	23	18	1	433
GB/A	42	36	20	2	460
Rest of state	47	29	23	1	561

Table 17: The Wisconsin Legislature's approval by region

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know	Refused	n
MKE City	42	45	13	0	159
Rest of MKE	58	29	13	0	617
msn	43	48	8	1	354
GB/A	53	36	8	2	383
Rest of state	51	30	18	1	472