

# WISCONSIN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## JIM DOYLE LEADS MARK GREEN IN GOVERNOR'S RACE

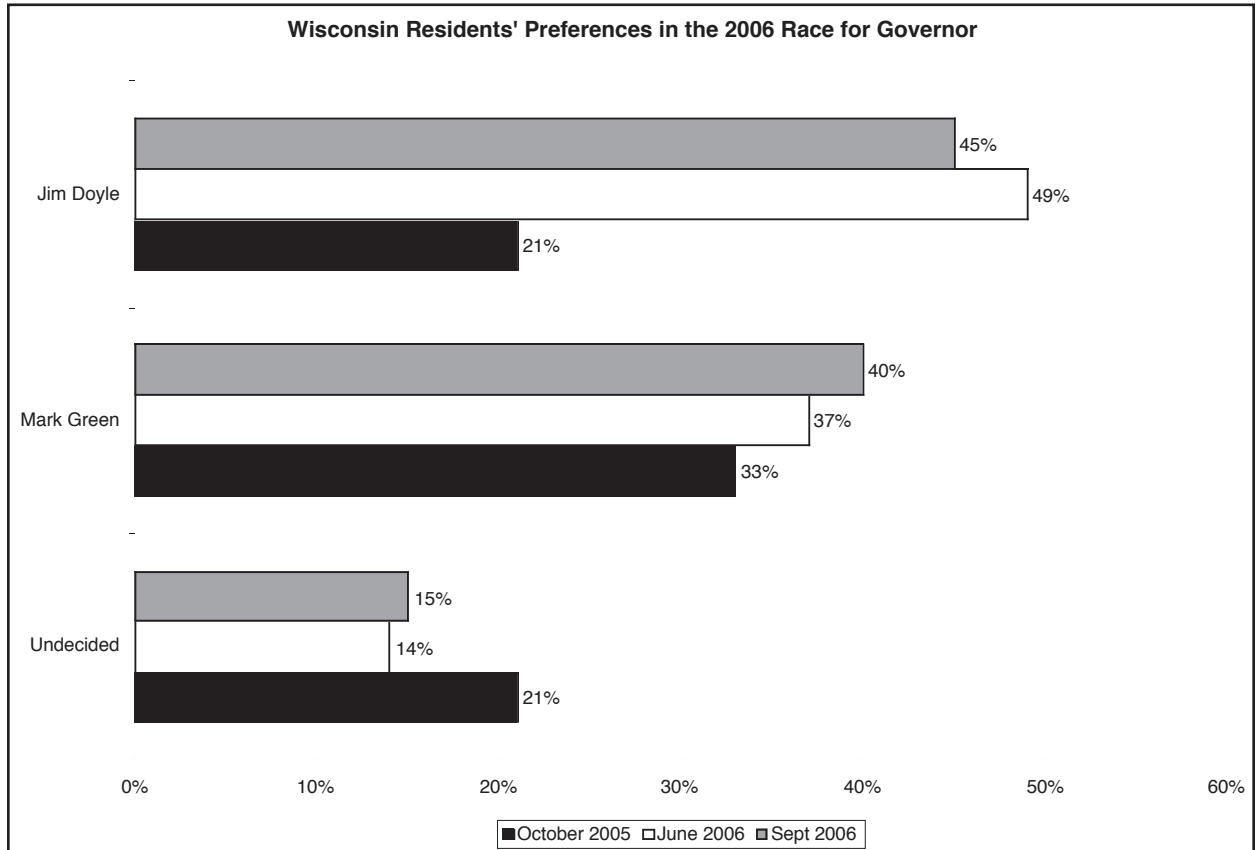
Six weeks before the next gubernatorial election, Jim Doyle has the lead over challenger Mark Green. In a head-to-head race Doyle leads Green 45% to 40%. These are among the key findings about politics from the most recent survey of 600 likely Wisconsin voters conducted by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute and Diversified Research between September 20 and 21, 2006. Doyle's lead over Green changes in some areas of the state. Doyle leads Green in Madison 55% to 33%; in outstate Wisconsin 45% to 32%; and surprisingly in the Green Bay area 50% to 39%. Green's strength lies in Waukesha County, 61% to 28% and the Milwaukee suburbs, 44% to 38%. The core of Jim Doyle's support comes from voters who identify themselves as liberals (78% to 15%) and middle-of-the-road (49% to 31%). Democrats support Doyle 84% to 10%, as do Independents 40% to 35%. Support also comes from college graduates — 47% to 40%. One of the gaps that has been closed since June is among female voters where Doyle only leads 44% to 39%. Green's support comes primarily from Republicans (80% to 12%), conservatives (60% to 21%), and voters who identify themselves as "born again" (53% to 37%).

If the election for Wisconsin Governor were held today between Mark Green for the Republicans and Jim Doyle for the Democrats (ROTATE), for whom would you likely vote?									
	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Mark Green	40%	44%	44%	61%	39%	42%	33%	42%	32%
Jim Doyle	45%	41%	38%	28%	50%	48%	55%	43%	45%
Undecided	15%	15%	18%	11%	11%	10%	12%	15%	23%

### *Senior citizen voting*

The one group that seems to be having an enormous impact on this race is senior citizens — voters who are 65 years of age or older. In the election they favor Jim Doyle 50% to 42%. They have a very positive view of Jim Doyle, favoring him 47% to 38% unfavorable. They dislike Mark Green, favoring him only 29% to 42% unfavorable. The wild card among them, as it is for many voters in Wisconsin, is George Bush. Among older voters, George Bush's unfavorables are 57% with only 37% favoring him. Senior citizens also have a different view of the state than most other voting groups. Fifty-one percent believe the state is on the right track, while only 40% believe it is on the wrong track. Nationally, only 22% believe the country is going in the right direction, while 69% believe it is going in the wrong direction. Considering the negative advertising being used by the Doyle campaign, it is very clear that senior

citizens are being influenced in their opinions of Mark Green by his association with George Bush and Congress.



**Candidates favorability ratings**

In this survey Jim Doyle’s favorability/unfavorable ratings are slightly lower than the last several years — 41% of the voters had a favorable opinion of him, while 41% had an unfavorable opinion. Going back in our surveys to 1993, this is the highest unfavorable rating that Doyle has received in any of our surveys. A more important result was Mark Green’s standings — 33% of the voters had a favorable opinion, but 33% of the voters also had an unfavorable opinion of him. We have only asked this question about Mark Green over the last two years, and the trend is down. His favorables have gone up 9% since October 2005, but his unfavorables have more than tripled, going from 10% to 33% in this survey. Granted, 34% of the voters either did not have an opinion, or did not recognize him, but his trend lines are certainly not going in the direction you would expect of a candidate who has not run for statewide office before.

In addition, George Bush, who may be a major factor in this campaign, has seen a slight uptick in his favorability — going up to 40% favorable, with 51% unfavorable. While this is an improvement since last June, it is still way behind his ratings over the year’s especially in September 2002 before the last gubernatorial election, where his favorability was 59% and his unfavorability was 35%.

The real question from these results is, as Mark Green’s visibility continues to rise, whether his favorable ratings will rise faster than his unfavorable ratings.

**The direction of the state**

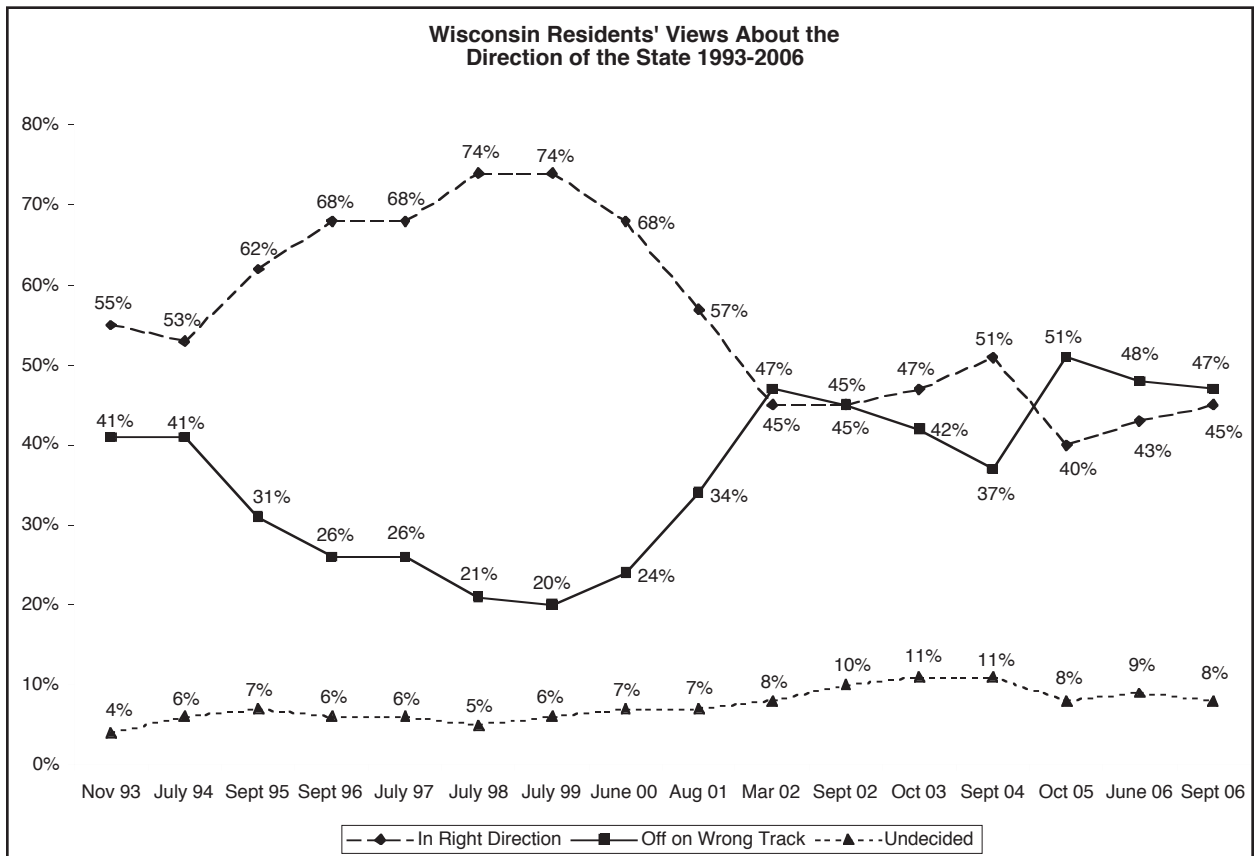
In this survey, 45% of the voters thought the state was going in the right direction, while 47% thought the state was on the wrong track. This is a slight improvement from last June when 43% thought

**Residents' Views Of Major Public Figures 1993-2006**

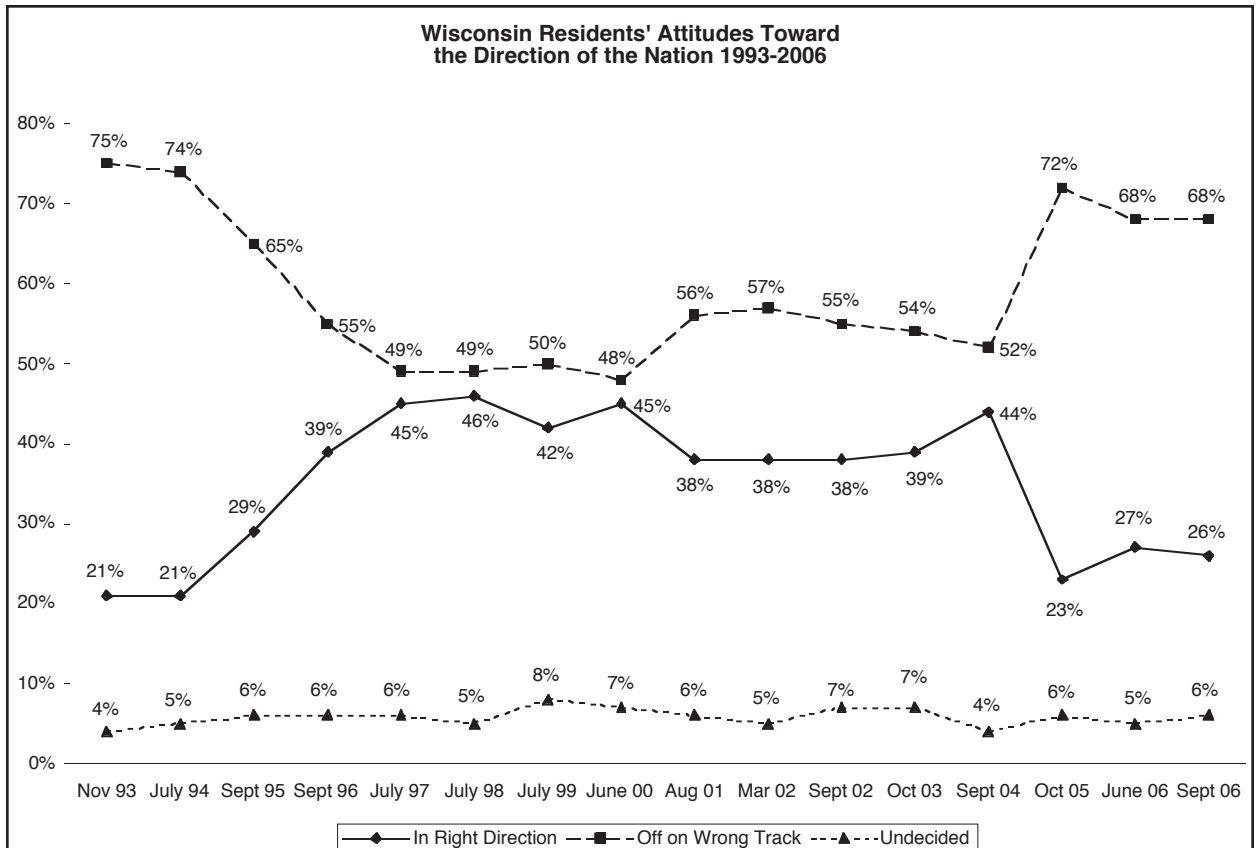
	May 1993	Nov 1993	Sept 1995	Sept 1996	July 1997	July 1998	July 1999	June 2000	Aug 2001	March 2002	Sept 2002	Oct 2003	Sept 2004	Oct 2005	June 2006	Sept 2006	
<b>George W. Bush</b>																	
Favorable	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	56%	50%	50%	75%	59%	50%	53%	43%	37%	40%	
Unfavorable	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	22%	36%	43%	20%	35%	45%	42%	51%	59%	51%	
Neutral/Did Not Recognize Name	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	22%	14%	7%	5%	6%	4%	4%	6%	4%	9%	
<b>Jim Doyle</b>																	
Favorable	30%	29%	37%	29%	35%	40%	36%	37%	33%	32%	41%	45%	46%	46%	44%	41%	
Unfavorable	11%	10%	18%	17%	17%	12%	13%	15%	16%	20%	28%	32%	33%	38%	38%	41%	
Neutral/Did Not Recognize Name	59%	61%	45%	54%	48%	48%	51%	48%	51%	48%	31%	22%	21%	16%	17%	18%	
<b>Mark Green</b>																	
Favorable	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	24%	26%	33%
Unfavorable	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	10%	19%	33%	
Neutral/Did Not Recognize Name	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	66%	55%	34%	

the state was going in the right direction, and 48% thought it was on the wrong track. What is interesting is that these results give an indication of how the voters are viewing the two candidates. For example, in the City of Milwaukee only 34% thought the state was going in the right direction; in the Milwaukee suburbs it was only 35% — areas that Mark Green did surprisingly well in. In Green Bay, however, 45% thought the state was going in the right direction; in Madison it was 51%. While these results, however,

Would you say that things in WISCONSIN are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?									
	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Right Direction	45%	34%	35%	49%	45%	62%	51%	37%	49%
Wrong Track	47%	57%	57%	41%	46%	29%	43%	51%	47%
Don't Know	8%	9%	8%	10%	9%	9%	5%	12%	5%



show a slight improvement for the state, they do not mirror the opinion of Wisconsin voters toward the direction of the country. In this survey, only 26% of the voters thought the country was going in the right direction, while 68% thought it was on the wrong track. This is almost the same results as June 2006, when 27% of the respondents thought the country was going in the right direction and 68% thought it was on the wrong track. Again, these numbers tend to run reasonably close across the state. One of the numbers that is interesting is that in outstate Wisconsin only 23% think the country is going in the right direction, while 75% think the country is on the wrong track. These are even higher than Madison's numbers of 24% in the right direction and 69% on the wrong track.



**Would you say that things in this COUNTRY are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
<b>Right Direction</b>	26%	27%	22%	33%	29%	35%	24%	24%	23%
<b>Wrong Track</b>	68%	59%	75%	50%	66%	60%	69%	70%	75%
<b>Don't Know</b>	6%	15%	4%	17%	5%	5%	6%	5%	2%

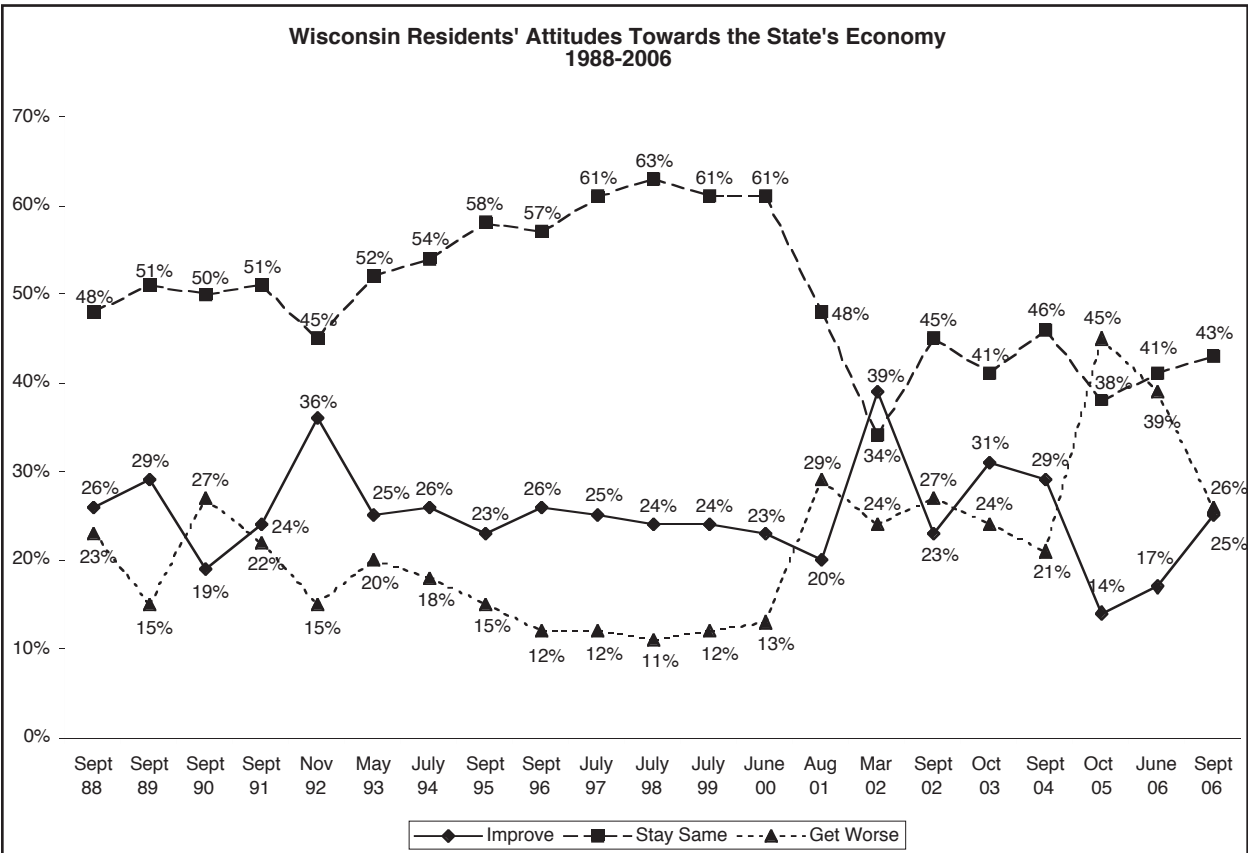
One of the issues that has been introduced in this campaign is Mark Green's support for President Bush's policies and the fact that Green is a Congressman. If the election in Wisconsin is about a national referendum on Washington, it may be much more important than the issues in the state. Clearly there is a major gap among Wisconsin voters between how they view the direction of the country and the direction of the state. Where they end up on this opinion may be crucial in the November election.

***Views about Wisconsin's economy.***

Another issue we have been tracking since 1988, which may also play an important role in the election, is voter's views about Wisconsin's economy. We asked voters in this survey if they expected the state's economic conditions to improve, stay the same, or get worse over the next year.

In this survey, 25% said they expected the economy to improve, while 26% said they thought it would get worse. This is a major shift from June of this year. In June 2006 only 17% of the respondents thought the state's economy would improve; while 39% expected it to get worse. Our sense from looking

Based on what you know or have heard about the economy of Wisconsin, do you expect state economic conditions to improve, stay the same, or get worse during the next year?									
	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Improve	25%	42%	23%	24%	22%	21%	23%	26%	21%
Stay Same	43%	27%	40%	51%	42%	54%	42%	43%	51%
Get Worse	26%	19%	28%	20%	33%	25%	33%	20%	24%
Don't Know	6%	12%	9%	5%	4%	0%	2%	11%	4%



at other data in this poll is that the drop in gasoline prices has had a major impact on how Wisconsin voters view the state's economy. This obviously will have an impact on the November elections if gas prices continue to fall or at least stabilize over the next six weeks.

**Conclusion**

While Governor Doyle maintains a lead over Mark Green the whole question of voters' attitudes toward both candidates may become the deciding factor in November. Over the last several years Wisconsin residents have not necessarily shown an affinity for Jim Doyle. His favorability has never reached 50%, and now it is starting, in our surveys, to linger in the low to mid-40 percent range. In many respects Doyle is "fixed" in the minds of Wisconsin voters. Mark Green, however, is different. He is a new face, and a new face who is starting to carry some heavy baggage. Much of this election will be decided by the voters in Wisconsin who have not necessarily made up their mind about their views of Mark Green. As it stands now, his 33% favorable, 33% unfavorable is not good news for a challenger

who has never run statewide before. The next six weeks will determine whether Wisconsin voters end up with a favorable view of Congressman Green, or decide to stay with a governor who they might not like personally, but they at least believe he can govern the state.

#### **ABOUT THE STUDY**

This study of 600 likely Wisconsin voters was conducted by telephone between September 20 and September 21, 2006. A total of 600 Wisconsin residents were interviewed. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 4% for percentages of the whole sample. For a percentage near 50%, for example, this means that repeated samples would produce results between 47% and 53%, 95 times out of 100.

This study was commissioned by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, Inc. The Institute was founded in 1987, and its mandate is to examine issues of public policy facing Wisconsin, using a non-partisan approach.

Dr. Michael LaVelle, President of Diversified Research, a nationally known survey research company supervised the project. Dr. LaVelle has a Ph.D. and has taught statistics and social research methods at the university level. He has been President of Diversified Research since 1982 and has over thirty years experience in survey research.