

From: RepresentUS

To: Interested Parties

Subject: Wisconsin Polling: Voters See Gerrymandering as a Major Problem, Want Reform

Date: August 24, 2021

Results of a recent survey in Wisconsin show that Republicans, Democrats and Independent voters agree that gerrymandering is a major problem that undermines the integrity of our elections. State legislators and other elected officials have an opportunity to improve trust in our elections by adopting fair voting district maps, improving transparency and preventing special interests from participating in redistricting.

This data is based on a survey of 410 participants in a Wisconsin online survey panel administered by YouGov. This survey was conducted between June 30 and July 8. For this sample of 410 respondents the worst-case margin of error at the 95% level is plus or minus 5.72%.

1) About Nine-in-ten Oppose Gerrymandering and Two-Thirds Say It Would Be a Major Problem if Voting Districts in Wisconsin Are Gerrymandered

Nearly nine-in-ten (87% of voters) oppose drawing voting districts to help one political party or certain politicians win an election. Across the board, gerrymandering is deeply unpopular with Wisconsinites – this includes 91% of Democrats, 88% of independents and unaffiliated voters, and 84% of Republicans who oppose gerrymandering. This bipartisan opposition to gerrymandering extends to people who voted for Donald Trump (81% oppose) and people who voted for Joe Biden (93% oppose).

By five-to-one (50% to 10%), voters expect that congressional and legislative districts in Wisconsin will be gerrymandered when the districts are redrawn this year. This concern exists in both parties as Republicans (39% to 11%) Democrats (58% to 6%) expect their districts will be gerrymandered. Independent voters also share this expectation (52% to 12%).

If their districts are gerrymandered, 69% of voters say it would be a major problem, including 84% of Democrats, 65% of independents, and 60% of Republicans.

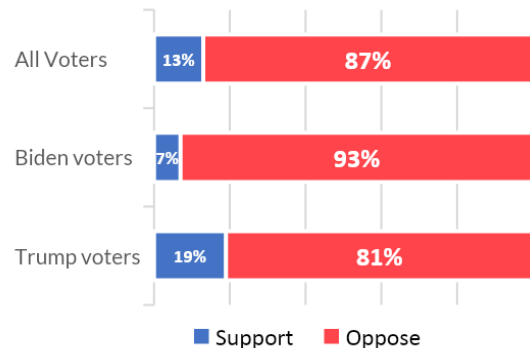
Voters so strongly believe that gerrymandering is a problem that they also put aside the advantages for their preferred political party. **Over nine-in-ten voters (93%) say congressional and legislative districts should be drawn in a fair way that does not benefit their preferred political party.** This view is shared by 100% of voters who identify as very liberal, 92% of moderate voters, and 91% of voters who identify as very conservative.

Finally, **half of voters (50%) do not trust state legislators to draw new congressional and state legislative voting districts,** while just 19% do trust legislators. **In fact, 73% of voters would support banning state politicians from even participating in the redistricting process** – compared to just 8% who would oppose such a ban. 77% of voters who think gerrymandered districts are a major problem support such a ban alongside 74% of Democrats, 65% of independents, and 56% of Republicans.

*As you may know, **redistricting** occurs every ten years when each state redraws their U.S. congressional and state legislative voting districts so that each district has an equal number of people.*

***Gerrymandering** is when those voting districts are drawn to help one political party or certain politicians win an election.*

Do you support or oppose gerrymandering?



However, there is an opening to gain the trust of voters. **If independent experts and leaders in both major parties agree that new voting districts are fair and not gerrymandered, 54% of voters would be more likely to trust their state’s elections**, including 73% of very liberal voters, 49% of moderate voters, and 46% of very conservative voters. Among the 69% of voters who say gerrymandering would be a major problem, 63% would have more trust in their state’s elections if voting districts were drawn fairly.

2) Substantial Majorities Support Policies That Increase Transparency, Limit Special Interests, and Prevent Advantage to One Party Over Another.

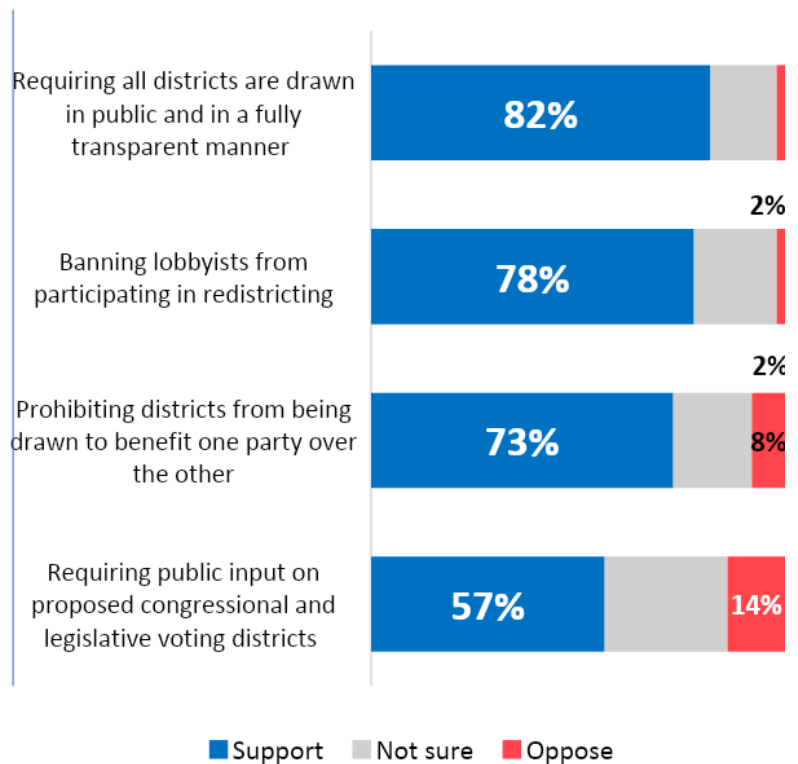
Because voters have widespread concerns that voting districts in their state will be gerrymandered, there is widespread support for policies that increase transparency and limit the role of special interests in the redistricting process.

More than eight-in-ten voters (82%) support requiring that voting districts be drawn in public and in a fully transparent manner. Just 2% of voters oppose such a requirement. Supporters of this policy include 80% of Republicans and 85% of Democrats, 90% of voters who say gerrymandering is a major problem, and 82% of men and 81% of women. **More specifically, by a four-to-one margin (57% support to 13% oppose) voters want the redistricting process in their state to include public input.**

A prominent 73% of voters also support “prohibiting districts from being drawn to benefit one political party over the other,” with strong agreement between both major political parties – Democrats support this with 80% and Republicans with 64%. Independent voters also considerably support this statement with 75% support.

In addition to increasing the public’s role in the redistricting process, 78% of voters want to limit the role of lobbyists and special interests.

Republicans are among the most likely to support this restriction (70% support), while over seven-in-ten voters across the political spectrum agree – 71% of conservative voters as well as 85% of liberal voters and 75% of moderate voters support this proposal.



3) Top Concerns: Gerrymandering Is a Conflict of Interest That Benefits Politicians and Undermines Our Elections. Voters Think This Process Needs More Transparency.

The problem with redistricting, as voters see it, is that it creates a conflict of interest that’s used by people in power to go behind closed doors and rig the outcome of our elections.

73% of voters express at least quite a bit of concern that “politicians today have used gerrymandering to rig the outcome of elections in their favor and undermine the integrity of our elections.” Again, there is consensus across party lines – a substantial 90% of Democrats, 70% of independents, and 57% of Republicans share this concern.

Another primary concern of voters is the lack of transparency in the process. **75% of voters have at least quite a bit of concern that “politicians and lobbyists gerrymander new districts behind closed doors with no transparency,”** including 74% of very conservative voters, 73% of moderate voters, 95% of very liberal voters, and 66% of voters who regularly follow current events and news.

A final major concern from voters is that “politicians can rig the outcome of their own election because they get to decide which voters and which communities they represent.” This ethically compromising position is at least quite a bit concerning to 71% of Wisconsin voters and is yet another area of bipartisan concern - 60% of Republicans, 66% of independents, and 90% of Democrats agree.