**Wisconsin to be center of political attention again in 2024**

By WisPolitics.com

Wisconsin likely will again be the tipping point in the 2024 presidential election with Joe Biden and Donald Trump neck and neck in seven battleground states, Marquette Law Poll Director Charles Franklin told the annual WisPolitics.com Polling Summit.

Franklin, one of three featured speakers at the summit in Milwaukee on Oct. 19, said a new Bloomberg News-Morning Consult poll of seven states was notable because rarely do media outlets have the resources to poll so broadly with sufficient numbers in the battleground states that will matter most in the 2024 Electoral College vote.

The poll, in the field Oct. 5-10, showed Trump neck-and-neck with Biden 46% to 44% in Wisconsin with a 4% margin of error; 10% of those surveyed said they wouldn’t vote or didn’t know who they would vote
for. Trump led Biden 47% to 43% combined among voters in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The results across those seven states had a margin of error of 1
percentage point.

“Wisconsin has been the tipping point state in the Electoral College in both ‘16 and ‘20,” he said, noting the number of battleground states is likely five, with Democrats having the advantage in Michigan and Republicans in North Carolina.

“So we’re certainly looking like we’re still in that spot.”

Trump narrowly won Wisconsin in 2016 on his way to beating Hillary Clinton; Biden edged Trump in Wisconsin in 2020 as Democrats took back the White House. Next year, Milwaukee will host the 2024 Republican National Convention.

Looking at the averages, Franklin said candidates have all been shifting up and down through the months, but in a narrow range, within about 3 points.

“We have the two best known candidates with actual records as president,” he said. “With at least on the Trump side, very devoted followers. On the Biden side, a less enthusiastic group, but they really don’t like Trump. And so this seems like a real recipe for a close race.”

It’s looking like a race for second place in the GOP primary, too, with Trump supporters and those with a negative view of Trump moving away from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis as former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley gets a boost. DeSantis had a chance and missed it, he added.

“So that’s a campaign that I think had its opportunity to make inroads in the Trump coalition, and it utterly failed to do so,” he said. “And no one else has come to do the same.”

Still, Franklin said he’s watching DeSantis decline as Haley rises, but he added Haley’s support “(is) hardly overwhelming.”

He noted Haley’s support grew to 20% from 10% after the first August debate in Milwaukee, and that share of the Republican vote likely comes from the 30% who have a negative view of Trump.

Even with Haley’s support doubling, it’s hard to see how Republican voters coalesce around one candidate, Franklin said.

“We could see the dropouts,” he said. “But it’s hard to see how that leads to coalescing.”

Even if one candidate gained support from everyone who dislikes Trump, that’s still only 30% of GOP voters, he noted.

A lot could change after early contests in Iowa and New Hampshire, but Franklin said there would have to be a major shakeup for Wisconsin’s April primary to be important. Wisconsin, however, will be hosting the Republican National Convention next summer and again be a center of attention in the fall.

The Des Moines Register’s chief politics reporter, Brianne Pfannenstiel, also at the event noted Trump has extremely strong support from his base in Iowa with backers largely dismissing Trump’s many legal problems. The other Republicans don’t have the same kind of stalwart backing, she added.

“You talk with people at Trump rallies, and they’re there caucusing for Donald Trump, and they’re very sure about it,” she said. “If you go to a Tim Scott event and Nikki Haley event, they’ve got that list of three or four people that they’re thinking about.”

University of New Hampshire Survey Center Director Andy Smith said Democrats have their own problems with Biden. Many voters just aren’t that enthusiastic since they feel the economy is doing poorly, gas prices are high and other issues, he said.

Many Democrats have argued Biden is too old, isn’t progressive enough, hasn’t pushed hard enough, or has failed to seize opportunities, Smith added.

“Democrats are not going to switch, by and large, to the Republican Party,” Smith said. “They may stay home somewhat if Biden is unpopular and the economy is still bad. But I think the Democrats are saddled with that, for better or worse.”

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