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**Advocacy Digest | October 18, 2022**

**Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**Johnson Up; Evers and Michels Tied**

The latest addition of the Marquette Law School Poll was recently released and shows Senator Ron Johnson with a lead over Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes by a margin of 52% to 46%. The poll also shows a tightening in the race for governor with Tony Evers leading Tim Michels 49% to 48%.

The margin of error of the poll released on October 12 was 4.3%.

The top issues with votes are inflation at 68%, public schools and gun violence at 60%, and abortion and crime both at 56%.

A key to any election is both parties getting their people to vote. The latest Marquette Law School poll showed that 84% of republicans and 83% of democrats are “absolutely certain” to vote in the November General Election. Voter intensity favored democrats over the summer and now that number has pulled to about even.

For more information on the most recent Marquette Law School poll [click here](https://law.marquette.edu/poll/).

**Outside Spending Tops 2020 Record in 2022**

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign announced that outside groups expressly advocating for or against candidates in Wisconsin this fall have already broken the spending record three weeks prior to the election.

So far, groups have spent $36.7 million exceeding the record set in 2020 of $36.57 million. Spending to help republicans far exceed those helping democrats by a margin of $29 million to $7.7 million.

The top sending groups on the right include the Right Direction Wisconsin PAC which is part of the Republican Governor Association and the Americans for Prosperity which has been advocating for Tim Michels for governor, Eric Toney for attorney general, and other GOP candidates running for the state senate and state assembly.

The top spending group on the left is the Wisconsin Conservation Voters Independent Expenditure Committee which has spent $3.15 million mostly on ads attacking Tim Michels on his stance on guns and abortion.

You can [click here](https://www.wisdc.org/news/press-releases/136-press-release-2022/7216-express-advocacy-groups-break-spending-record-weeks-before-the-election) to see all of the details on the Wisconsin Democracy Report.

**Wisconsin has a Record $4.3 Billion Budget Surplus**

It was announced recently that Wisconsin has a record budget surplus of $4.3 billion and the state also has maintained a record high in its “rainy day fund” of $1.73 billion.

The Wisconsin Department of Administration announced the good news which covered the 2022 fiscal year that ended on June 30. DOA Secretary Designee Kathy Blumefeld stated, “The State of Wisconsin in in the best financial shape we’ve ever been in.”

The outcome of the November election, especially the race for governor, will be the determining factor on how these funds are either spent by the state on existing or new programs or returned to the taxpayers in the form of tax cuts.

**Make a Plan to Vote in the 2022 General Election.**

You have multiple options to make sure you cast your vote in the 2022 General Election this year.

You can vote absentee by mail, in person absentee with your municipal clerk starting on Tuesday, October 25, or in personal at your polling place on Tuesday, November 8.

Please plan now to ensure your vote counts this fall!

# FROM NAHB: Builder Confidence Down 10 Straight Months as Market Continues to Weaken

BY [ROBERT DIETZ](https://eyeonhousing.org/author/rdietz479/)

In a further signal that rising interest rates, building material bottlenecks and elevated home prices continue to weaken the housing market, builder sentiment fell for the 10th straight month in October and traffic of prospective buyers fell to its lowest level since 2012, with the exception of two months during the Spring of 2020.

Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes dropped eight points in October to 38 – half the level it was just six months ago — according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). This is the lowest confidence reading since August 2012, with the exception of the onset of the pandemic in the spring of 2020.

High mortgage rates approaching 7% have significantly weakened demand, particularly for first-time and first-generation prospective home buyers. This will be the first year since 2011 to see a decline for single-family starts. And given expectations for ongoing elevated interest rates due to actions by the Federal Reserve, 2023 is forecasted to see additional single-family building declines as the housing contraction continues.  While some analysts have suggested that the housing market is now more ‘balanced,’ the truth is that the homeownership rate will decline in the quarters ahead as higher interest rates and ongoing elevated construction costs continue to price out large number of prospective buyers.

Derived from a monthly survey that NAHB has been conducting for more than 35 years, the NAHB/Wells Fargo HMI gauges builder perceptions of current single-family home sales and sales expectations for the next six months as “good,” “fair” or “poor.” The survey also asks builders to rate traffic of prospective buyers as “high to very high,” “average” or “low to very low.” Scores for each component are then used to calculate a seasonally adjusted index where any number over 50 indicates that more builders view conditions as good than poor.

All three HMI components posted declines in October. Current sales conditions fell nine points to 45, sales expectations in the next six months declined 11 points to 35 and traffic of prospective buyers fell six points to 25.

Looking at the three-month moving averages for regional HMI scores, the Northeast fell three points to 48, the Midwest dropped three points to 41, the South fell seven points to 49 and the West posted a seven-point decline to 34.

The HMI tables can be found at [nahb.org/hmi](http://www.nahb.org/hmi).