

To: Interested Parties

From: GBAO

Date: May 13, 2026

Recent Results from a Survey on Clemency in Wisconsin

A majority of Wisconsin voters support sentencing reviews and clemency for certain people determined to be able to safely reenter their communities. A majority favor ending or shortening prison sentences and support is even higher for incarcerated people on hospice and incarcerated women who killed or attacked their abusers. Voters also support shortening community supervision and pardoning certain categories of people charged with non-violent offenses.

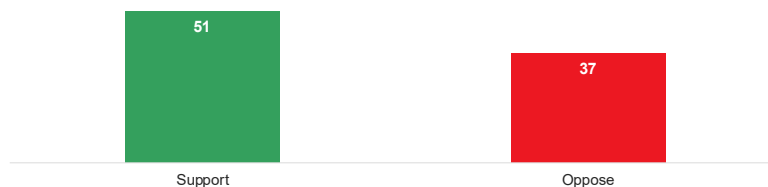
The following findings are based on a survey of 800 registered voters in Wisconsin. Polling was conducted March 26 – 30, 2026, with surveys completed by phone via text-to-web methodology. Respondents were weighted to reflect the estimated demographic proportions of the Wisconsin registered voters. The topline results among voters have a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval.

Key Findings

- **A majority of Wisconsinites support ending or shortening sentences of certain incarcerated people who are determined to be able to safely re-enter their communities.** Democrats and Independents (77% and 52%, respectively) support ending or shortening the sentences of these incarcerated people. Voters across age, gender, and racial lines agree that certain people should receive clemency.

Clemency Support

Some people have suggested ending or shortening the prison sentences of certain people in prison if they meet certain selected criteria and the courts determine that they can successfully and safely re-enter their communities. Would you support or oppose releasing these people from prison?



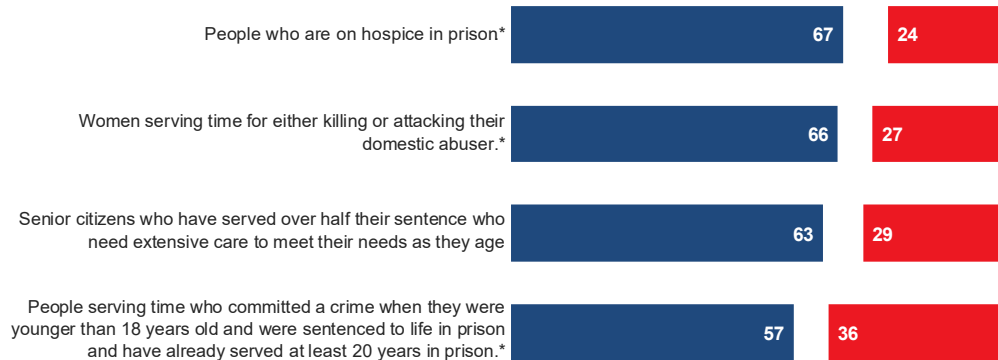
- **Support is even higher for those on hospice/seniors who need extensive care, women who killed or attacked their abuser, and those who committed their offense as a minor and have already served 20 years.** In fact, a plurality of those who worry 'some' about crime support early release for these groups of incarcerated people .



Early Release Criteria

Do you support or oppose releasing people in prison if they fulfill that criteria- and are also determined not to be a danger to their communities?

● Total Support ● Total Oppose

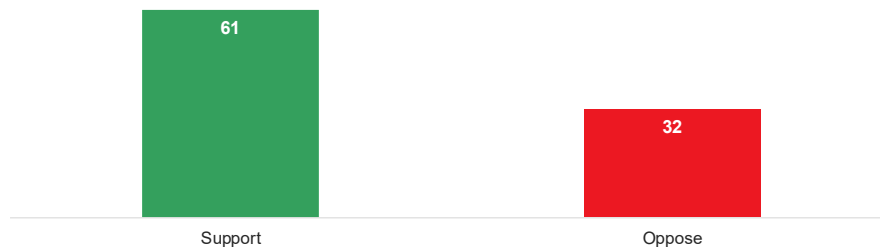


*Heard/read by half of the sample

- **After receiving information about probation and parole, Wisconsinites also support the Governor shortening certain sentences that involve community supervision.** A majority of Democrats (84%) and Independents (61%) support shortening these sentences, which Republicans narrowly oppose (42% support, 53% oppose).

Shortening Community Supervision Support

Some people finish out their prison sentences under various forms of community supervision, such as probation or parole. The conditions of community supervision can make it more likely that someone is returned to prison because of small violations of their parole, such as missing a meeting with a parole officer, rather than because they committed a new crime. Given this additional information, would you support or oppose the Governor shortening sentences that involve community supervision for certain individuals who are determined not to be a danger to their communities?



- **A majority supports pardons for multiple categories of people, with those charged with non-violent offenses receiving the most support.** Voters across party lines support pardons for those charged with non-violent offenses so they can more easily obtain licensing/jobs/housing, for those who completed drug treatment or anger management, and for those who have completed more than 2 years of community supervision. Even a majority of those who worry 'some' or a 'great deal' about crime support pardons for these groups. A majority also support pardons for those charged with violent crime over a decade ago and have not had additional convictions, though support is lower.

Pardon Criteria

● Total Support ● Total Oppose

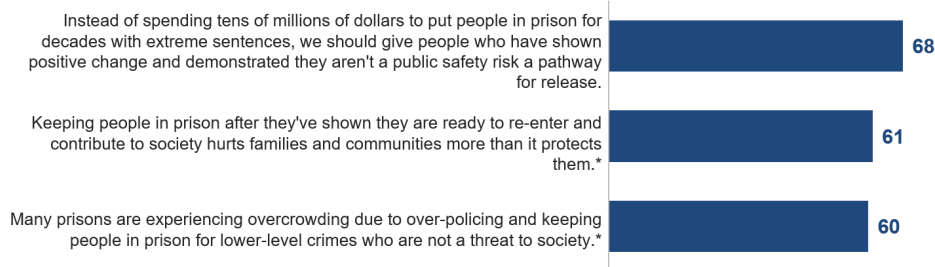


- **Voters agree with a number of clemency messages**, including those focused on government spending on prisons, harm to families and communities, and over-policing.

Clemency Statements

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

● Total Agree

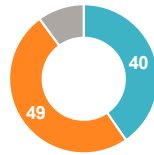


*Split Sample

Even those who worry 'some' about crime (65%) and those who somewhat oppose clemency (61%) agree that "instead of spending tens of millions of dollars to put people in prison for decades with extreme sentences, we should give people who have shown positive change and demonstrated they aren't a public safety risk a pathway for release."

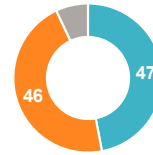
- **A sentencing reform message that evokes accountability holds its own against a 'tough on crime' argument.** This approach outperforms an argument about mass incarceration and the ability of people to change.

More Than Worst Moment



- People are **more than the worst thing they've ever done**. We all have the power to change, grow, and deserve a second chance. By releasing people who don't pose a threat and can re-enter society safely, we can **reduce mass incarceration and strengthen communities**.
- People convicted of crimes need to serve the time that they were sentenced to because they **need to be held accountable for the harm they've caused**. We shouldn't send the message that when you commit a crime, you don't have to pay your debt.

Accountability But Not Excessive Sentences



- People who commit a crime should be held accountable for their actions, **but excessive sentences do not help communities heal**. People who can successfully re-enter their communities should be **given a second chance to make a positive contribution to society**.