

WMOV American Pulse Poll



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MEMORANDUM

EMBARGOED Until 9:30 AM EST Wednesday, November 22, 2023

TO: The WMOV Audience
FROM: Dustin Olson, Pollster
DATE: Nov. 22, 2023
SUBJECT: Top Takeaways from WMOV / American Pulse West Virginia Poll

*"The sun doesn't always shine in West Virginia, but the people do."
— John F. Kennedy*

OVERVIEW

The **WMOV / American Pulse Poll** of likely voters in West Virginia's Republican Primary reveals people's preferences for various political figures, top races, and key issues.

The biggest headline from the survey is that Gov. Jim Justice is far and away the front-runner to be the Republican nominee to the U.S. Senate and with Sen. Joe Manchin's decision to retire, positioning Justice as the most likely next senator from West Virginia.

These insights offer a comprehensive view of the political landscape leading up to the 2024 elections.

THE BIG PICTURE

Below are the Big Picture insights we gleaned from this survey.

1. Political Figure Favorability

- **Jim Justice** garners the highest favorability rating with a total of 73.0% favorable impressions, reflecting a strong position in the political sphere of West Virginia.
- **Patrick Morrisey** and **Moore Capito** also show high favorability among Republican voters, with total favorable scores of 62.9% and 60.1%, respectively.
- The candidates with the highest **Net Favorability Ratings** (Favorable rating minus Unfavorable rating) are the following:
 - **Jim Justice: +50.4% Net Favorability**
 - **Patrick Morrisey: +40.0% Net Favorability**
 - **Mac Warner: +39.8% Net Favorability**

2. Primary Election Preferences

- **U.S. Senate Race:**
 - **Jim Justice leads with 55.7%** of likely Republican Primary voters choosing him with **Undecided (not sure / don't know) in 2nd at 22.1%** and **Alex Mooney in 3rd at 19.9%**.
 - Following Sen. Manchin's decision to retire, our survey indicates Jim Justice will likely be the next U.S. Senator from West Virginia, which makes the nationwide battle for the U.S. Senate that much more competitive.
- **Governor's Race:**
 - **Patrick Morrisey (30.5%)** and **Moore Capito (22.6%)** are the top choices.
 - The next highest is the **Undecided (not sure / don't know) at 22.8%**.
- **2nd Congressional District:**
 - If Alex Mooney is a choice on the ballot, he is the clear leader with 41.1%.
 - **40.8% are Undecided.** Next up is Riley Moore at 11.6%.
- **Attorney General:**
 - JB McCuskey slightly leads with 16.1% to Mike Stuart's 10.6% and Ryan Weld at 5.4%,
 - With 67.9% Undecided, this race is still very much up in the air.
- **Secretary of State:**
 - Kris Warner is the only candidate in double digits and leads the field with a solid 20.3%.
 - Doug Skaff comes in 2nd at 7.5%.
 - With 58.2% Undecided and a large field of candidates, it is still anybody's game.
- **Auditor:**
 - Of all the races tested, this one has the most Undecideds at 71.5% and is neck and neck with Householder at 15.7%, and Hanna at 12.8%.

3. Voter Concerns and Issues

- **Justice Lawsuits:** Governor Jim Justice's legal issues appear to influence voters, with 46.2% less likely to vote for him due to lawsuits alleging non-payment of bills.
 - However, what is surprising is that 25.6% say they are more likely to vote for him due to the lawsuits, which is more than the 23.2% who say they are "Much Less Likely" to vote for him due to the lawsuits.
 - When determining which issues move numbers, we look for intensity, which we define as any issue that gets a "much more likely" or "much less likely" over 40%.
- **Family Tradition:** The presence of family on the ballot or in office simultaneously was generally viewed negatively, with 48.2% less likely to support such candidates.
 - Only 15.4% say they are more likely to vote for a candidate who has a family member joining them on the ballot.



- This could have an impact in 2024 on Chris Miller who is the son of Congresswoman Carol Miller, brothers Kris & Mac Warner, and cousins Moore Capito and Riley Moore, who are both related to Senator Shelley Moore Capito.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

- Jim Justice's strong favorability positions him as the leader in the U.S. Senate race, despite legal controversies.
- Family dynamics in politics could play a role in voter decisions, potentially impacting candidates with familial political connections. There is no upside and only downside.
- Alex Mooney's continued strength in Congressional District 2 suggests a solid base of support, potentially a factor impacting both this and other races.

METHODOLOGY

With **414 interviews** conducted through American Pulse's precision multimodal methodology, we achieved a **Margin of Error** of **+/- 4.8%** at a **95% Confidence Level**.

This method ensured a broad representation across demographics, enhancing the accuracy and reliability of results.

- Live Telephone Interview: 103N (25.0%)
 - Text-to-Web Survey: 114N (27.5%)
 - Interactive Voice Response: 197N (47.5%)
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