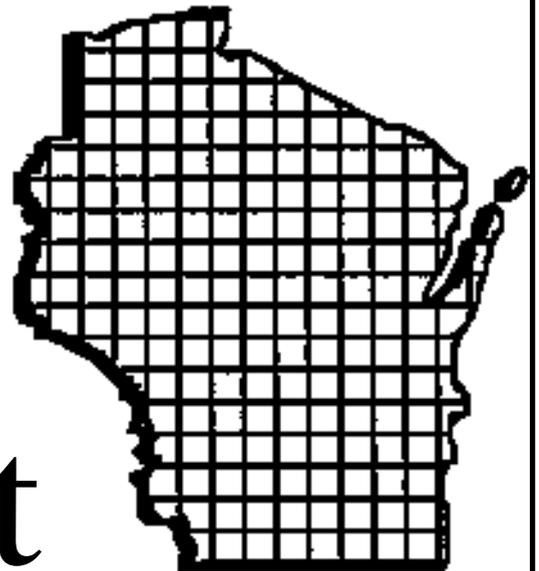


Wisconsin

Policy
Research
Institute

Report



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Wisconsin Speaks

A Survey of Public Opinion

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT:

This current Wisconsin Citizen Survey was conducted by Harris Interactive. Dr. Gordon S. Black, who has supervised all our survey research dating back to 1987, directed this project.

What we are presenting here is different from the type of data we presented earlier in 2004. For the first time we have included a number of coded verbatim responses that we obtained from the respondents to our survey. What makes this unusual is that these are normal Wisconsin residents telling us in a scientific survey what is really on their minds when it comes to issues in the state. The way it works is that respondents are asked a general question at the beginning of the survey, and they tell the questioner in their own words the issue they are most concerned about. There is no other filtering data, information or questions. This is a technique that in the past was frequently used, but more commonly dropped now. The reason is that it is very costly to enter these responses into data banks. Over the years we have continued this practice because we feel it is one of the best barometers for what is known in the survey research business as "top of mind." What that means is that none of the people in this poll were coaxed; they are simply telling us in their own words what is on their minds.

The results show enormous intensity with issues that have a direct economic impact on Wisconsin residents. Whether it is taxes, the accelerating cost of health care and prescription drugs, or job stability, all these issues can be wrapped up into a circle that points to a frustration with the lack of economic predictability in the individual's life.

We hope that people take the time to read this, because it is unusual to have this type of document that presents a scientific look at what Wisconsin people really think about issues, rather than having it somehow analyzed or spun by politicians or media types.



James H. Miller

WISCONSIN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE, INC.

P.O. Box 487 • Thiensville, WI 53092
(262) 242-6409 • Fax: (262) 242-6459

E-mail: wpri@wpri.org • Internet: www.wpri.org

WISCONSIN SPEAKS

A Survey of Public Opinion

GORDON S. BLACK, PH.D.

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INTRODUCTION

We have been conducting public opinion surveys of Wisconsin residents since 1987. This survey was conducted from September 22 to September 26, 2004. There has already been a release of some of the major issues covered in this survey.

What makes this particular study so unusual is that, probably for the first time in Wisconsin, a poll has published the unfiltered opinions of Wisconsin residents. Most surveys will ask people about issues. Few, if any, polls besides the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute (WPRI) will actually ask the classic survey question on an open-end basis to have respondents describe the most important issue facing Wisconsin. This type of question is asked at the beginning of a poll and is totally unfiltered by any other information. It gives a much more accurate picture of the views and feelings of the respondents. The usual poll will have several potential issues that are filtered and force people to make a choice: open-ended survey questions do not. The reason this technique has been dropped by almost all polls in Wisconsin and across the country is that it is very expensive to administer.

We are presenting the results from 602 Wisconsin residents. Clearly, there is enormous concern in this state with taxes, jobs, unemployment, and health care. This data originates from approximately 90% of our survey respondents who identified state problems. The results are their verbatim reply to the question: "What do you think is the SINGLE MOST important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should do something about?" We have not included the answers of respondents who offered no opinion or could not make a choice - 63 responses. The rest of the opinions are presented in the following pages. It paints a very interesting picture of the real problems Wisconsinites see in their state and believe their state government should deal with over the next several years. The timing is simple. We are about to begin the next budget cycle, which will culminate in July 1, 2005 with the beginning of the next biennial state budget. We hope our state government officials learn something from this study.

The Methodology for the Study

The data in this report are based on a randomly selected sample of 602 Wisconsin residents who are 18 years of age and older. The sample was drawn from a list of telephone numbers generated by a computer. This method includes both unlisted numbers and new listings in proportion to their representation in the population. Nearly every number was called at least three times before the number was discarded. This process, and the sampling itself, is controlled by a Computer Aided Sampling (CAS) System, which monitors the entire process to insure that callbacks are made at appropriate times and that numbers are sampled correctly.

The methodology is the same process that Harris Interactive employs in its telephone election surveys. The demographic profile of the sample of residents surveyed was compared against 2000 census results for the state. The sample was weighted to compensate for two harder-to-reach populations: younger respondents and black respondents. The number of male and female respondents was also controlled to insure an approximately equal division.

A survey of 602 randomly selected residents has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent for percentages based on the entire sample. For an underlying percentage of 50%, for example, this means that repeated samples would produce results between 46% and 54%, 95 times out of 100. The margin of error for sub-samples, such as women, blacks, or young people, will be significantly greater.

Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive, known for its Harris Poll, has over forty years experience in market research and public opinion polling. Headquartered in Rochester, New York, Harris Interactive does not work for political candidates of either political party. The firm maintains a nonpartisan position since so much of the opinion polling falls in the public domain.

Dr. Gordon S. Black, the author of the survey, received his doctorate in Political Science from Stanford University in 1970. He taught public opinion and voting behavior at the University of Rochester between 1968 and 1981, when he resigned as Associate Professor of Political Science. He has published more than a dozen articles on public opinion and voting behavior in professional journals. Dr. Black is a Trustee of the National Council on Public Polls and is a member of the Council of Survey Research Organizations and the American Association for Public Opinion Research.

What do you think is the SINGLE MOST important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should do something about?

TAXES - 121 RESPONSES

- We have very high property taxes. We have the second or third highest tax rate in the country.
- Taxes, they're too high.
- Taxes. They need to be lowered.
- There is so many about them, it's hard to say them all. Lower taxes that is one of them. Lower the gasoline, it is really expensive. That is all.
- Taxes and fuel.
- Taxes. It's one of the highest tax state in the country.
- Taxes, lowering them.
- Real estate taxes.
- High property taxes. Not really.
- Taxes, I think in U.S. we are number 5 or 4 with highest taxes.
- Taxes.
- The taxes. It seems to be going up. The price of our licenses are going up again as well because we have to re-new our license.
- Taxes. They're too high.
- I think they should do away with all the taxation when employees retire.
- Property taxes. I know we have one of the higher rates around.
- Maybe it's our taxes. They are too high.
- Lowering property tax freeze. I feel like some people are paying enough. More than enough.
- Taxes are too high.
- Taxes. They're pretty high. The fourth highest in the state. They need to be lowered.
- I don't know. Lower taxes.
- Taxes, then jobs.
- Lowering taxes. Everyone says that.
- I think that the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is the taxes, especially the real estate taxes.
- Taxes because they are all way too high.
- Too high taxation.
- Taxes.
- The property taxes are just too high. They need to be lowered.
- Tax, real estate taxes are too high.
- Taxes are a problem as we have some of the highest.
- Property taxes. I think they are outrageous. Also cut in human service budgets.
- Taxes and health care.
- Taxes. It doesn't seem to be going anywhere but up.
- Tax relief because we're one of the highest tax states in the nation.
- High taxes. Property taxes.
- Property taxes because they continue to get higher and higher.
- Taxes.
- Lower taxes.

- Reducing taxes.
- The biggest problem is property taxes. I feel they're relatively high compared to other states.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is the property taxes. They're too high and should be lowered.
- Taxes are too high.
- Taxes.
- Reducing taxes because we are over taxed.
- I really don't know what we should be doing to tell you the truth. But I suppose lower the property taxes maybe.
- Taxes. Need better paying jobs. Wages are very low.
- Property taxes. They've been going up 20-25% for the 4 years we've lived here.
- Taxes. They're too high.
- The tax rate. Nope, that's pretty much it.
- High taxes.
- High taxes. That's about it.
- Lowering taxes. Property taxes are too high.
- The high taxes.
- The taxes are too high.
- Taxes.
- I would say lower taxes. Wisconsin is tax hell.
- High taxes.
- Reduce taxes.
- Taxes for family owned business. We need breaks to be able to pass the business down.
- Taxes, lowering taxes.
- Real estate taxes. I think they're too high.
- Cutting taxes. There's too damn many taxes in Wisconsin. They are too high.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes because they're too high.
- The economics. The job situation. There's lots of unemployment. It hurts us all. Our taxes are too high.
- Probably taxes. That's all I can think of.
- I don't know. I suppose reduce the taxes. That's probably the most important thing.
- Taxes! They're too high. They're higher than other states, at least for property taxes.
- Taxes.
- Property taxes.
- Taxes. Wisconsin has the highest taxes in the nation.
- I think that the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is lowering taxes, especially real estate taxes.
- Taxes are too high. The war. Social security, we might never see that when we retire.
- Taxes. Lowering them. We are horrendously taxed.
- All taxes are too high and too many of them.
- Property taxes. They are too high because we have a lousy governor.
- Lowering taxes because they are too high. We are the third highest tax paying state in the country.
- High taxes.
- Property taxes being too high.

- High taxes. There's too much spending that hurts the economy.
- Lowering our taxes, because they are too high.
- Taxes, because they are too high.
- Taxes, they are too high.
- Taxes because they're too high.
- Probably our taxes. Well we are the third highest tax paying state in the country, well I mean if taxes are too high your paying way too damn much.
- Taxes.
- Cutting taxes. Because we are the highest tax state and we are driving old and young people out of state.
- Lowering taxes because the taxes are way too high for the average person and there are more average people than rich people.
- Make tax cuts permanent.
- Taxes and pollution because we are the highest taxed state in the USA and our pollution problems are just chaos and they are not doing enough about them.
- Taxes, I would like to see them lower, or to get the property tax/lottery credit reinstated, we don't get that anymore.
- Taxes. Too high.
- High taxes, I think the property taxes are insane and when you pay high taxes decreases the economy.
- The way they have the highest taxes in the country. They need to use them for really serious problems.
- Taxes. Wasteful Wisconsin government spending.
- Lowering taxes.
- Cut some of the taxes.
- Taxes, they are too high.
- Taxes. After just being out west seeing how low the gasoline is then coming back here it's ridiculous. One state over and it's 20 cents cheaper.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is the taxes.
- Probably try to lower the property taxes. For Wisconsin, if you go down to Oklahoma you hardly pay any, Florida you hardly pay any. It's not compared to what we pay. 5 acres there is \$280 something and 1 acre here I'm paying about \$2000.
- Taxes. It seems that with the senior citizens and their money problems that they won't be able to stay in their homes anymore.
- The economy. They need to lower taxes to create more jobs. That would be the most pressing issue.
- Taxes. Property taxes. Health care costs. I think there are especially high in this area.
- The single most important problem is property taxes in Madison. They're too high and the funding is too low.
- Taxes. They are too high.
- Taxes, too high.
- Taxes, homeowner maker.
- Taxes are too high.
- Property tax. Lower property tax. It's too high. Yes.
- Taxes. Because we keep paying and paying and nothing gets fixed. The government is wasteful.
- Taxes. They're too high. Property taxes. Crime. That's about it.
- Taxes. Because taxes are way too high.
- Property taxes. It's too high.

- Taxes, property and income taxes. People should have to mend their own pants instead of having the government do everything for them.
- Taxes.
- The economy because we're losing jobs and taxes are going up and we can't afford to live here.
- Retail taxes.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is the taxes. They're too high and they need to lower them.
- The corporate taxes are too low.
- Taxes are too high.

HEALTH CARE ISSUES - 102 RESPONSES

- I think health care issues. The cost of medicines right now, and basically the facilities for people. They can do better than that for the elderly.
- Health care. Because all they're doing is health care for the elderly rather than having affordable health care for middle class people like myself. Last year I almost died from a heart attack. Now it costs more just to stay alive.
- Medical insurance. It's too expensive, and it doesn't cover enough.
- Health care because is rising at an astronomical rate for prescription drugs that people cannot afford it and this is health care for everybody.
- Health care.
- Everything. First of all, the health insurance because it's hard to get health insurance that will pay for your medications.
- Health insurance, because there is a lot of people who don't have it, and the prices keep going up.
- Health care because there is a lot of people who don't have it.
- Decent health care for elderly people.
- Health care, it is too expensive.
- Health care.
- The health system (federal and state). It's an absolute mess. The Medicare system is not fair. The residents of Florida have much more benefits that are paid for by the federal government. Lots of other states too. It shouldn't be one state that gets all the benefits. That and anyone with insurance; their needs have to be addressed whether it's by an employer or individually. We have a rich nation. We shouldn't have these problems with a rich nation like ours.
- Lower pharmaceutical prices. Because they are too, pardon me, damn expensive. That's it basically.
- Health care.
- Health care because it's a national problem.
- I would probably say health care cost. Health care costs go up in costs and employers must find a way to compensate for insurance for their employees. One thing that they do to compensate is by cutting down on things in the company or other things like the benefits and retirement plans. In the long run it comes back to us, it's a big cycle.
- Health care, access to health care.
- A combination of social security and health insurance. I think prescription drugs are so expensive. It's not going well at all.
- Health care costs, because I'm going to be 65 soon and it will cost me a lot more.
- The rising health care cost. Because I am a dad with three kids and one on the way and its getting expensive.

- Health care, I think it stinks.
- Health care. Availability for everyone to have health care. Seniors and veterans have to drive 90 miles to get health care and the younger people can't afford it. That's it.
- Health insurance because I don't have any.
- There's several. First off there's the rising cost of hospital care. The second our manufacturing being shipped overseas the economy in general. Giving tax breaks while running a deficit. The war also. Or winning the peace in the middle east when half the people in Iraq marry their cousins.
- Well, I work in child care and education and I think that a lot more work needs to be done in the education department. I see a lot of parents struggling for childcare in the sense of getting help from the state. They just get the run around, no one cares to help them, they never get call backs and when they do get help its not a lot, not enough.
- Health care. It all goes back to the Medicare and the latest Medicare drug benefits. There are other issues, but this is all I have to say about health care.
- Health care, because I'm a nurse and I know what happens, people don't go see their doctor because they don't have insurance, they wait until the problem is severe rather than see a doctor when they should because they can't afford it.
- Well umm let me think. I'm disabled and I can't afford anything. I need health care. I need a break on property taxes and they are so high I can't afford to live here. I don't have children, so I don't have any problems with the education but I think the standards should be the same, public or private. They should have more enthusiast on public schools and not private schools. Public schools should met higher standards.
- Health issues are the biggest problems because prices are too high for prescription drugs and medical attention. That's all. That's about the biggest issue that really concerns me right now because I'm 87 years old and it's really hard for the elderly to pay for these kinds of drugs.
- Medicare. It's hard to get.
- Health care costs because they are just too high.
- Our health care. It's out of control.
- Health care is way too dang high, can't afford it, I isn't even got it myself, can't afford it.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is reducing prescription drugs. I take 3 pills a day and they're at least \$100 a month. I hardly have any money left after that.
- Health care, too many people without it. Not enough employees that do get the health care they need.
- I think that the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is health care.
- Health insurance. Most of the jobs are part-time and they don't offer health insurance.
- Health care, I think there is a lot of old people without it.
- Health care, long-term costs, Medicare.
- Health problems. Medication is skyrocketing.
- Health care.
- Health issues. The insurance, the costs of everything.
- Health care, Education, Taxes, No I think those are the big three.
- I think that we need to take the excessive profit out of medicine and pharmacy and give medical coverage to all citizens, because you die if you don't have it for one thing. Why should the wealthy or the employed or the privileged have choices for medical care when those without don't in a democracy?
- Health care. Making it available to all people in Wisconsin and having it be affordable.
- Health care. I think people need it. I think seniors need better control on their prescriptions
- I have no idea. Maybe the health care system.
- Health care. Because so many people do not have health care.
- Health care.

- Health care, I think we should have a better health care system.
- Health care, because there are people without health care and some people with too much health care.
- Health care. If you don't have insurance it's not easy to get your prescriptions.
- I think that the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is health care.
- Medical services. Too many people can't afford it.
- Health care.
- Probably health care and jobs both. Good paying jobs. Not very many people can afford health care anymore, it is really expensive. It should not be the job of the employer to provide it.
- Health care
- Health care. Because your senior citizens who go on Medicare and their prescriptions aren't paid for. Health care is very important.
- Health care.
- Health care.
- Health care. Because I'm the only one in my family that has health care.
- Health care
- I guess the health care. Put a lid on the costs and make sure everyone gets coverage. That way, no one gets left out.
- Health care costs.
- Probably health care. We are getting brought to the clean by the pharmaceutical companies. That's the biggest thing right now.
- Health insurance. I don't think they have very high prices.
- Health insurance is too high.
- Health care.
- Health care. A lot of us can't afford it especially the elderly.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is health insurance like Medicare. We should get some decent prescription coverage and not what George Bush is planning. It's going to make it worse than it already is.
- Health care because it costs too much.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is health insurance.
- Insurance for people who need it, health insurance.
- Health care. Problems with pollution in our lakes. Education. I think that's all that would affect me at this time.
- I would say medical coverage because the costs are outrageous right now especially for prescription drugs. That's it.
- Health care reform because I think there's a need for more care for seniors and prescriptions.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is health care because it's not health care for Americans. Not every person has insurance and can pay for it.
- Some medical assistance for the elderly. They can't afford the medication bills.
- Probably health care. It is getting a little out of control and expensive for most people.
- Health care. I'm at that age where I need it. The economy. Medication. The rising cost of medicine.
- Probably health care.
- Health insurance.
- Health care. The cost for premiums is much too high.
- Health care. There are millions of people without any. And what Bush did was criminal.

- There are a lot of people out there without health care. They can't support them.
- Health care. General people can't afford premiums.
- Health. The very high costs. They need to bring down the costs of prescriptions.
- I think health care is probably the most important issue right now. Probably because of the rising cost of prescription medicine and health care in general and the cost of health care insurance. That about covers it, I think.
- Health insurance.
- Medicines. Costs too much.
- Health care. The rising cost of health care and benefits being taken away.
- The biggest problem is they should make health care more affordable. There are a lot of jobs that are low paying and cannot afford it.
- Help senior citizens and low-income families. I think that the older people are being drained of their income. They can't afford medication and they have to pay an arm and a leg for their pills. My mom is a senior and she has to pay an arm and a leg for her medication. My aunt could hardly pay rent when she was alive because she didn't have lots of money.
- Health care. They should have health care for everyone. Canadian drugs should come in here.
- Old prescription pills are no good for me. I'm 68 and I have some sickness and I spend a lot of money on it.
- Health costs, there's more people nowadays who are not covered and the drug prices are getting too high for them to pay.
- Medical and its costs, because its becoming not possible to keep up with the costs.
- Health care. I think medications are too high. We should be able to purchase from Canada, and employers should provide insurance for their employees.
- Health care, the whole thing stinks. It is downgrading and not upgrading.
- Health care cost.
- I think health care. It is not sufficient. For example, I called the doctor and the medicine I had been given was a new one so she gave me samples and I was to try it for 4 weeks but it did nothing for me. So I called her back and I didn't get to speak to her. I got a nurse and I explained that this wasn't doing anything and perhaps I could have another sample of something else. She said she'd get back to me and I'm still waiting and that was yesterday.
- Health care. Because I'm 70 years old and everybody's trying to hustle me. The medicine is too expensive for me.
- Health insurance, because most people are losing their health insurance and it seems like premiums are going up and people are worried.

UNEMPLOYMENT/JOB/WAGES - 84 RESPONSES

- I think the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is jobs but the main thing that they have to address is increasing the quality of the jobs.
- Helping people get jobs.
- Unemployment, because we are losing manufacturing jobs.
- I have very little to say about that. I think that they should be investing money in to the people in terms of jobs and schools.
- Jobs. I think there should be more jobs and better pay.
- Jobs.
- Better paying jobs.
- Jobs. There's no jobs here.

- I would say jobs. The economy of jobs and the problem of jobs going elsewhere outside of the state or outside of the United States.
- Jobs and prescription drugs. No jobs no money. Take care of the family.
- Jobs, increasing wages, health insurance.
- The jobless rate. People just don't have jobs. My son lost his job almost a year ago and it took him 7 months to find a new one.
- I think that the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is unemployment.
- The job market.
- Getting more jobs because I have not been employed for the last 2 years and there should be higher wages.
- The loss of jobs. A lot of people are being laid off and losing their jobs.
- Keeping jobs and funding on track.
- Jobs, lack of new high paying jobs.
- The single most important problem is unemployment. I don't know what they should do because I'm not an economist.
- Jobs. I've only been here a year so I'm just getting by. We've lost a lot of jobs because companies have closed and students need jobs.
- Jobs. They need better paying jobs.
- Keeping good jobs. Wisconsin doesn't have a lot of jobs; as well college students tend to leave the state.
- Probably jobs because of the plant closures and stuff that has been going on.
- Unemployment.
- Unemployment, because there is more and more of it.
- Better paying jobs. It seems that there's jobs out there, but they're not well-paying.
- More jobs for people. Because where I live there's a lot of people who's out of work because their jobs keep moving and there's nothing here for them. Well they need better paying jobs for the middle class families.
- Unemployment. Because 9.5% of Wisconsin is unemployed.
- Becoming a high tech state and moving towards a newer economy, less old style manufacturing and more high tech. I think that's where all the jobs will be.
- Jobs.
- No work. There is not enough jobs.
- I would say jobs. The economy is not as good as it was. No, that would probably be it.
- Probably jobs right now. It would be between that and medical insurance.
- Jobs. Employment. We've lost a lot of jobs in Wisconsin. We have three unemployed in our family.
- Jobs and health care situations.
- Jobs. I don't know. You caught me off guard. Just leave it with that.
- Jobs. There are a lot of people that are out of work and need higher paying jobs.
- Unemployment.
- Job creation and economics. Wisconsin has been hit with a lot of unemployment. Nope that's it.
- Unemployment.
- Jobs. \$80,000 gone in manufacturing jobs.
- Jobs. We need more jobs.
- Unemployment rate and jobs moving overseas.
- Good paying entree job, working a living wage and a 40-hour workweek.
- Probably jobs. Well, I guess we lost quite a few jobs here. There were a lot of manufacturing jobs lost.

- Jobs.
- Jobs. Because they are getting harder to find.
- The loss of manufacturing jobs. There are all sorts of jobs outside the country.
- Better jobs and keeping jobs here helping out with the people who are here.
- The jobs especially.
- Jobs disappearing, and the benefits are disappearing, also the war on Iraq.
- Well more jobs I suppose for the lower class of people that need work so bad.
- Jobs. Benefits and medical care.
- Jobs. There are not enough of them.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is the jobs. They should be getting the manufacturing jobs back from overseas and getting minimum wage up higher.
- Probably the unemployment rate.
- Jobs, there should be more better jobs available, in manufacturing. The economy.
- Jobs and employment. Employment has risen in the last 3-4 years. Education too. They could spend more people's tax money on education.
- Even if I don't live there I'm going give my opinion, I would say jobs.
- Jobs, too many unemployed, not enough good paying jobs.
- Jobs. Because people are losing their jobs. Companies are pulling jobs.
- Jobs, keeping business here.
- Need more job. Too many people are out of work.
- Probably keeping the jobs here. Instead of sending them overseas and helping big corporations overseas.
- Well, it would be the job. The loss of jobs.
- Unemployment. We need more jobs.
- The presidential race coming up. Wisconsin is doing okay but they're complaining that they don't have any jobs. They don't have much to complain about. Democrats are spending too much money and they want to put in a tax break.
- There are too many things. Well probably jobs.
- The biggest problem is lack of jobs, because the jobs are closed then shipped over seas to India or China or other countries.
- Unemployment. Industries keep moving out and people are left without a job.
- Unemployment, because I feel that there's a lot of middle-class people without jobs, especially in the blue-collar workforce. A lot of people have lost their jobs.
- Jobs. A lot of people can't find jobs. Even I can't. Nope, that's it.
- The lack of jobs, because we had our area specifically has lost a lot of jobs, we had two big companies leave.
- Jobs - create more.
- The single most important problem is unemployment.
- I think that the single most important problem that is facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is the job situation.
- Jobs and medical care.
- Jobs, I don't think a lot of our factories are staying here in Wisconsin, so therefore out here in the country the jobs out here aren't plentiful. Without jobs people won't stay in Wisconsin. I guess not.
- Creating jobs. Not losing anymore. I work construction and a lot of places are closing so we have to stay competitive.
- Finding jobs. Minimum wage. I'm very much for life. Education. Well, I just think we need to have well educated people to run this country. In my opinion, it's deteriorating.

- Jobs. It keeps the economy going.
- Jobs and the economy, because there has been so many jobs that have been lost. My husband's job is on the line and people are leaving the area and leaving to go elsewhere to find jobs.
- Probably jobs. I think the job situation should be a little better than what it is.
- Unemployment. Too many people without jobs.

SCHOOLS/EDUCATION - 55 RESPONSES

- Education and this is because our public schools have failed.
- Education.
- Equal distribution funds for schools and towns. The larger cities get the bulk of the money and the smaller cities do not get much.
- Education because the public schools are losing a lot of money and it hurts the children more. They cut a lot of programs that the children need.
- Education.
- Education, specifically the funding for public education. Because I don't think that we are providing sufficient funds to public schools to provide a good education.
- Education. I think it's very important. Our children are precious commodities and we should do everything we can for them.
- Since I have 2 children in college and the tuition is high. Because it affects me and the tuition and risen and it's expected to rise again.
- Education. We need better education. Better funding for education.
- Education and jobs.
- Schooling, especially medical.
- Education and fuel.
- Probably education. The environment. We need to preserve the water supply and keep the waters clean.
- How about financial aid for college students.
- Education. The reason we don't live in Milwaukee is that we can't put our children in public school because the public schools are so bad.
- Education, primarily I feel that there are too many students and less resources.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is the schools. I believe that they took too much money away from the schools and they should give it back.
- They should do something about inadequate funding for schools, because schools are vastly under funded.
- Education. Funding and making sure that schools have enough money. Better teacher's pay.
- School system.
- Shortage of money for public education. No, that will do it.
- Education because I don't believe kids these days are being educated to the best potential.
- Education, being able to afford the public school system, needs additional funding.
- The cost of education, I think higher education is too expensive.
- Schools. More funding to reduce class size. Just because I feel that not as good education can occur if the classes are big in size.
- Education.
- Education, lack of books.
- Education, poverty, and segregation. Statehood as well.
- Education.

- Eliminating QEO that the government has for teachers. I think it should be eliminated.
- Education.
- The cost and quality of our education. I'm just thinking about our future. Our children are our future. We should be investing in them. That's it.
- Education, because it the most important to our young citizens.
- Education.
- Education.
- School funding, or lack of school funding I should say. All the programs have been cut, we have larger class sizes there is just no money for school.
- Education, my working card was spent and I think that teachers are not recognized or rewarded for what they do.
- Quality schools are right up there at the top. I think that kids are the future and I think kids get a bad rap that they're irresponsible but I think good education is what they need.
- Education. Well because I think it's the most important issue.
- Umm, holy cow. First most important? I guess working in education I'd say the school system. Money for education. Schools, special education mostly. There isn't money for funding with special needs children. There is no money to support them after their education is done too.
- I would imagine education or medical, so that everyone has health insurance and schools have enough money.
- Education. Well I don't know if infinite groups have anything to do with it. But they're teaching Hispanic kids Spanish, which is allowing them to become ignorant without learning any English. I think it's hurting the Hispanic population here in Wisconsin.
- Education, because I think there are a lot of children being lost in the cracks - whether they may or may not be disabled and need extra help. As far as funding, everyone is getting their funding cut and there's overcrowding in classrooms. Colleges have had to make a big increase in the past couple of years, but social funding isn't matching up.
- I don't really know - better schooling.
- I think all the problems are coming from how we educate our young people. I don't agree with the public schools. I think there's too much government interference.
- Education. I don't think there's quality in it.
- Education, because they are cutting funding and people living in limited income houses won't be able to afford going to school.
- The single most important problem is the that schools are slipping, they are not as good as they should be.
- Cutting the school's budget, because I think it's going to cause larger class sizes.
- I don't know. School funding. There are lots of conservatives who want to limit property taxes to small increases each year, while federal funding is decreasing rapidly and the schools are getting less and less funding.
- I think as far as teachers go, they should get rid of the QEO. Since they've instituted that, I've been losing buying power. Governor Doyle has promised to the WEA that he would work to repeal the QEO and to date he has done nothing in moving towards that goal.
- I don't know, right now things seem to be right tight with money with school and different areas they need money but the budget seems to be hard to balance. A lot of people are out of work I suppose. Right now balancing the budget is the hardest thing in the state. It is very hard to get people back to work the tax bank is low. There is a lot of factors that comes into balancing the money. They are not taking in most things that they should be because the economy is low.
- Education, I really don't know.
- Schools because they took funding away from them and now they are struggling.
- Education. There's too many cuts in the area. I think children are suffering because of it.

OTHER - 42 RESPONSES

- Public Safety. I feel that disgruntled employees are eminent with lack of fund and wages and that they're not performing to the best of their abilities and over populating schools.
- Security.
- I think that the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is getting Bush out of the White House.
- Probably picking up dead animals on the road.
- Mainly about special services. They desperately need to be different or changed.
- Transportation, outgrowing the freeway system here.
- Transportation, the highways. The highways are a real mess around here. They need repairs and they can't handle the traffic.
- Over-population.
- I think national security. It is very important, a lot more than the other problems.
- Actually the president. The federal government, George Bush, he is the biggest problem facing the state because we are at war.
- National security. What we're doing now.
- Probably to make it safer from terrorist. Just because we don't feel safe in our own country what good is freedom.
- National security. Continue what they are doing and improve on things.
- The fluctuating gas prices.
- Well there are so many thing but we have no money for it keep raising the minimum wages and besides that we have a pretty good state.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is the low minimum wage. People should be getting more money especially poor people.
- The gas prices are way too high and very expensive.
- I would say family issues such as helping families that need things for children and teenagers to do.
- War in Iraq.
- Get done with that war.
- I think they should eliminate unions. I think unions are ruining the country. I'm opposed to the power of the unions. Our labor union almost runs the city and almost runs the country. They planned a very large demonstration against the president that happened during his visit here today. Get rid of unions.
- Price of gas. I think it's not really a problem but there's not much of any problems here.
- National defense.
- The single most important problem is the high price of gas; they should lower the price of gas.
- Diversity. There is not much information for the Hispanic population out here and we are very outnumbered and not very represented.
- The Republicans controlling the legislature. They are out of control, they waste too much time on fringe issues.
- I think that the primary issue in the national election is security. Well, we're at war. It's a very different war and the enemy can strike anywhere in the United States. The primary function of the national government is to secure the borders and protect the populous.
- The war. We're sending Americans off to be killed and the people that are there won't appreciate any freedom that are given to them through gun point.
- Terrorism. Need to protect the citizens of our country.
- Under aged pregnancies. There's too many of them.

- The war in Iraq.
- The war in Iraq. People are dying and war is illegal.
- Terrorism.
- Making sure Bush is elected and making sure Feingold isn't elected.
- Security. If you don't have that then you won't have anything else.
- Money, not enough money, not enough for economy workers.
- The first thing it should be doing is protecting our security and enforcing laws.
- I think that the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is Liberalism.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is the energy. The cost for energy which is gas and natural gas is too high.
- Public Safety. I say this just because of the situation the country is in.
- Middle class money problems, you either have to be rich or dirt poor to get help.
- National security.

LOSS OF BUSINESS/ECONOMY - 38 RESPONSES

- The economy, because it's in a shamble.
- Jobs, we've lost too many and the few that went back to work don't get paid enough. For example, like McDonalds at 3 dollars you don't make enough.
- Retaining jobs. If we don't retain our jobs in the state of Wisconsin, our manufacturing jobs will lose a huge part of tax basis. Most of them are high paying jobs, therefore they are highly taxed and they contribute to the state's economy.
- Employment. Get more jobs here.
- The economy, I have nowhere to work. Nobody seems to have any money to spend.
- Economy, jobs. Because I feel particularly in the area we live that there aren't many employment opportunities.
- Employment. A lot of small factories are moving. I read recently about 100 new jobs. From what I am hearing, I am hearing a lot of people have lost jobs in small towns. My job in nursing isn't threatened. A lot of people said they lost jobs at the paper mills and paper factories. It's just going back and forth.
- Jobs, too many jobs being lost.
- Loss of manufacturing jobs.
- The economy. I think the economy is very stagnant. The stock market is down. Employment is down.
- Economy. Jobs lost there is less work.
- Everything. Everybody's losing their jobs in the state of Wisconsin. Businesses are moving out of Wisconsin. Taxes are ridiculous. Government won't help them with anything. They work all their life before they can retire.
- Economy. Keeping industry here.
- I think that they need to be in tuned to the people so they get higher paying jobs. I think we are losing a lot of jobs over seas and they need to stay here.
- Keeping the jobs here in the United States. Health costs and health insurance. No, that should do it.
- Economy and taxes.
- The economy because the loss of jobs and low income.
- Keeping more business in the state. A lot of my friends are losing their jobs and there is a lot of people that are unemployed.

- Economy.
- I would say the economy needs improving.
- The economy.
- The economy, creating more higher paying jobs.
- Economy.
- The economy. It's not very good. There're lots of unemployed people who can't get good jobs, there aren't even many low-paying jobs.
- Keeping employment here because there are too many people out of work these days. Nope, that's it.
- Economy.
- Employment. Construction workers have nowhere to go. There are no jobs for them. Health care is a concern also.
- Jobs. Well I don't want to see them sent out of the country. Well, yeah, health insurance. Well it should be made available to people that can't afford it. And do something about the war.
- Well that's a good question. I think the government should look after the manufacturing sector.
- Keeping jobs from going overseas.
- I don't know right now. Job security. Just our health care I guess.
- Loss of jobs. Wisconsin has been a manufacturer state for years. We're losing a lot of jobs.
- Keeping the industrial jobs here. We're losing too many industrial jobs out of state and out of country.
- Overall the economy and welfare.
- Jobs. It's because we've only lost how many thousand? We've lost a lot of jobs.
- Probably economic growth. I know that it's getting a little better but I know a lot of people who have lost jobs and it's been a concern for a long time.
- Strengthening the economy. The economy is not as strong as it should be.
- Jobs, we are losing jobs.

GOVERNMENT ISSUES - 35 RESPONSES

- The bad roads.
- That's a bias on my end. I can't fairly answer that. Well I guess I'll be democratic and say transportation. It's not a very well coordinated transportation system between counties, or even within counties. That is, the public transportation system.
- Government. Not sure why.
- Provide more money to the police and old age. I feel that money should be restored to that. Not that I can think of.
- Budget deficit. We need to spend less money. It's a social responsibility I guess.
- Over expenditure of our tax dollar.
- Well, they just talked about the debt and the inflation and in the last 8 months it's doubled.
- The deficit. It is too high.
- Dairy policy.
- Finding ways to have less government.
- Spending. Just because it is a high, inefficient spending state.
- Highways.
- Cutting back on spending. Because taxes are too high.
- All these politicians, get rid of them all. They are all liars. They promise, they promise 'till they get elected by you and they don't give you shit.

- House insurance.
- The national debt. Any debt really.
- The Minnesota/Wisconsin bridge in Houlcon going into Stillwater Minnesota because of traffic congestion.
- Fix the debt.
- The government needs to be more careful of their funding and how they give/send money. However, it is unfair because everything is federal or the state makes the changes. Nothing happens close to home.
- Deficit. That state deficit because of having to fund the deficit the city and schools have had to dramatically cut their funds.
- Well, I would fix the finances, create jobs, balance the budget.
- Spending, I guess because of all the different contracts and contractors which we can handle ourselves.
- Spending. That's the single most important thing.
- Lack of integrity in the legislature.
- Get their deficit, they're way in the hole.
- Oh, I think that the government should stop paying bus drivers. Come out of our money. Millions of dollars. They can walk, skateboard or walk to schools in our community. Waste of money to drive the kids to school.
- I think nationwide the government is cutting back on programs. The federal government should help the state government more. They're cutting police services, school programs, housing. Medical costs are too high and insurance doesn't cover all the expenses.
- Overspending. There's an awful lot of roads not finished.
- The budget.
- Local government spending. It needs to be controlled.
- Balance budget. Everything in general.
- Corruption, because I think it's horrible to see how bad it's gotten these days.
- Cutting the budget. The government spends too much money.
- Just making sure that public services are taken care of.
- Financial situation, the deficit.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM/PROBLEMS WITH LAWS - 21 RESPONSES

- Probably the known child molesters shouldn't be allowed to live anywhere near schools or other places with children. I have three grandchildren in one school and there's a convicted child molester living less than ten yards from that school. We can't do anything about it because then we're breaking their right to live by kids. The laws about known child molesters should be changed. This is a real problem and we can't do anything about it because we're breaking their rights.
- Abortion, health care, that's good so far.
- Stop crimes. Too many people are being killed and it's too much going out of control.
- Crime probably. Because there is a lot of it. A lot of young people committing crime. I don't know what the Government can do about it. Education probably, because if people are educated then they will not commit crimes and have better jobs.
- I think it's values like legislating homosexual marriages. We are starting things that are truly evil and then there is more crime. Yep.
- Crime.
- I don't really know. There's a lot of problems. Crime, schooling for the kids, jobs. There's a lot of problems.
- Drugs. There is too many out there.
- Marriage amendment law. To protect the marriage between one man and one women.

- Abortions.
- Gay marriages. Health insurance. The big thing is health insurance because my mom doesn't have any. Not that I can think of.
- Crime. I think there is a lot of it in the city.
- The single most important problem facing Wisconsin is the way they treat people in the interrogation rooms. They're not fair about it and don't follow the rules.
- Violence. People are getting killed everyday and something has got to be done to stop this.
- I find there are too many people speeding on the highways because I was in a car crash a few years ago and nearly died because another driver was in a rush to see his girlfriend.
- Stop killing baby because babies are human too.
- Abortion because it's wrong.
- The gay marriage thing. This one will open a whole can of worms.
- Abortion. Get rid of that. Because it's a life. Everybody's life is what's most important to them.
- Stopping abortions.
- I am very concerned that they will pass an amendment on the same sex marriage.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - 18 RESPONSES

- Cleaning up the environment.
- Less building. There doesn't seem to be much land left.
- The pollution in Lake Michigan.
- Mercury in the water.
- The pollution of Lake Michigan, because water is a resource that we need to conserve and we need to pass it on to future generations. We have to get some sort of fuel source. We need to stop going to war for oil. We need more alternative energy sources. That's it.
- Clean water.
- All the pollution is causing a lot of problems, it mainly comes from all the pesticides we use, vehicles and other sources because we're too crowded.
- I would say protection of the environment. They don't protect it enough.
- I don't know what to tell you there, there's a lot of problems. They're cleaning out the rivers and that.
- Environmental degradation.
- Protect the environment. Health care. Education.
- The quality of water and the sewage in the lakes.
- Locally I would think the sewer problems and the pollution in Lake Michigan. Because it's ruining the environment.
- Environment, prescription drugs, education.
- The environment. Republicans keep taking away funding.
- I believe that the single most important problem facing Wisconsin that the government should be doing something about is the air pollution.
- The use of the Great Lakes Water. They need water for parts of the U.S. because they're drying up or don't have any water at all.
- No land to hunt on.

WELFARE/POVERTY/SOCIAL ISSUES - 18 RESPONSES

- Poverty. There's too many people that aren't getting good income. Don't have good homes to stay in.
- Welfare.
- Poverty and jobs because our national economy is in debt and we are not able to get things like better health care.
- Social Security. There's a lot of baby boomers that are coming of age and it's going to be depleted in no time at all.
- Social security.
- The poverty.
- Poverty, because I think the whole world agrees that poverty is a big problem. I think it's #1 because it's a catalyst for other problems.
- Special needs cuts. I have a special needs son. Only 2 or 3 states offer special therapy for autistic children. The government says it's way too expensive to treat autistic children ages 5 to 18 or 20. My son will need to go into a group home when he comes of age but with the way they're cutting back and closing group homes, I'm really worried about where he'll be able to go. They've cut back from 30 hours to a whopping 6 hours per week for therapy (for autistic kids). The schools are supposed to pick up but they can't provide the 1:1 treatment these kids need. I'm a single mom trying to run a farm so I can be home with my special needs son and avoid the costs of day care. They've cut out my respite care. I used it to get the work done. I need a hospital bed for my son so he doesn't fall out and split his head open as he does now. I can't afford it (\$1,000.00) and the government won't help.
- Low income children and promoting programs like head start and early head start.
- The lack of resources for low-income families.
- Affordable housing.
- Personal freedom.
- Our children because they don't do anything for them, they are in foster care, there are no provisions for them, and they overlook all these things.
- Going homeless.
- Welfare child welfare. Because there is lots of poverty in Wisconsin and I see it everyday at work.
- The hungry, because the government has cut up so many services that the poor people don't have a chance anymore. I know a lot of people misuse it, but they have chances. And another thing, Wisconsin has cut out a lot of support for the handicapped. That is a big issue. There has been so many services cut back. They should get more services.
- Poverty, because I've seen an awful lot of people who don't have anything.
- Helping the senior citizens. Were on a very low income so it's hard to live and afford a house.

FARMING - 5 RESPONSES

- I don't know. The poor crop land. The land is so wet; we didn't get the crops in. We need to buy feed.
- I'd have to say not helping fund the farmers.
- Milk, Wisconsin is not treated fairly.
- Try to keep the milk prices up and keep more jobs coming into the state, or bigger businesses or factories.
- Farming, they should help out with it to get the industry back on its feet, hard industry to get going, there is no money.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The **Wisconsin Policy Research Institute** is a not-for-profit institute established to study public-policy issues affecting the state of Wisconsin.

Under the new federalism, government policy increasingly is made at the state and local levels. These public-policy decisions affect the life of every citizen in the state. Our goal is to provide nonpartisan research on key issues affecting Wisconsinites, so that their elected representatives can make informed decisions to improve the quality of life and future of the state.

Our major priority is to increase the accountability of Wisconsin's government. State and local governments must be responsive to the citizenry, both in terms of the programs they devise and the tax money they spend. Accountability should apply in every area to which the state devotes the public's funds.

The Institute's agenda encompasses the following issues: education, welfare and social services, criminal justice, taxes and spending, and economic development.

We believe that the views of the citizens of Wisconsin should guide the decisions of government officials. To help accomplish this, we also conduct regular public-opinion polls that are designed to inform public officials about how the citizenry views major statewide issues. These polls are disseminated through the media and are made available to the general public and the legislative and executive branches of state government. It is essential that elected officials remember that all of the programs they create and all of the money they spend comes from the citizens of Wisconsin and is made available through their taxes. Public policy should reflect the real needs and concerns of all of the citizens of the state and not those of specific special-interest groups.