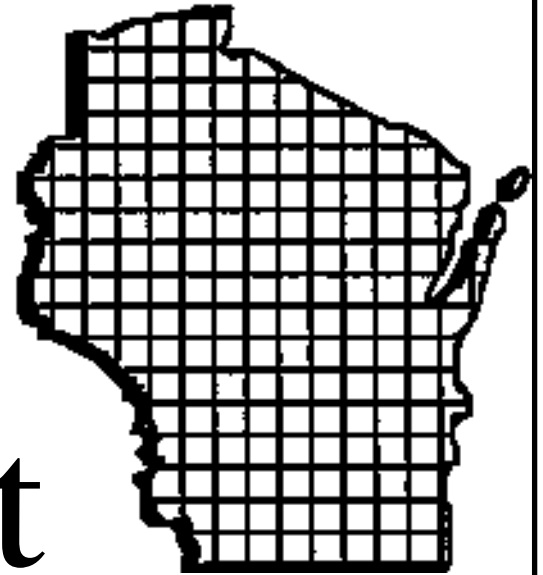


Wisconsin

Policy  
Research  
Institute

Report



December 2007

Volume 20, Number 10

**The Wisconsin  
Citizen Survey  
December 2007**

*A Survey of Wisconsin Public Opinion*

## REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Diversified Research, a nationally known survey research company, conducted this Wisconsin Citizen Survey. Dr. Michael LaVelle, who has had a relationship with us since 1987, directed this project. He has been President of Diversified Research since 1982, has thirty years of experience in survey research, and has taught statistics and social research methods at the university level.

Wisconsin's residents are very concerned about the growing cost of their health care and prescription drugs. Thirty percent of our residents identified it as the issue needing the most attention from our state government. Only 20% of our respondents thought the current health care system should be kept the same, while 39% favored reform and 34% favored radical change. Yet only 23% of our residents support a Wisconsin government-run health care system. However, if a government-run health care system was implemented in Wisconsin, 66% believed that out-of-state people would move into the state to enroll in this new program. That could resurrect the old welfare-migration debate of the early 1990s.

Our respondents were also concerned about the issue of illegal immigrants. There was overwhelming opposition to allowing illegal immigrants to obtain state benefits. Seventy-eight percent opposed allowing illegal immigrants to apply for driver's licenses and 86% opposed illegal immigrants receiving discounted in-state tuition at the University of Wisconsin. The only issue where our respondents were split was on the issue of allowing illegal immigrant children to attend public schools. On that issue 46% supported it and 46% opposed this idea.

Finally Wisconsin residents are as pessimistic as we have seen over the last twenty years. Only 11% of our residents believe our state's economy will improve over the next year, while 19% believe their family's economic situation will improve. Only 34% believe the state is moving in the right direction, while 56% believe it is on the wrong track. Politically, 40% of our residents now view themselves as Independents, the highest number we have ever seen since we began polling this question. Twelve percent believe that voters have the power to determine what state government spends, 82% believe it is lobbying groups. Only 7% believe the ethics of state government have gotten better over the last ten years. Just 6% believe the ethics of the state legislature have gotten better over the last decade. Finally, only 2% of the people in this state believe they can trust state government to do what is right almost all the time.

What does this all mean? Simply that 2008 could be a very difficult time for incumbents in Wisconsin.



James H. Miller

## WISCONSIN POLICY

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# THE WISCONSIN CITIZEN SURVEY

DECEMBER 2007

MICHAEL LAVELLE, PH.D.  
JAMES H. MILLER

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
WISCONSIN RESIDENTS VERY DISILLUSIONED WITH THEIR STATE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS	4
WISCONSIN RESIDENTS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROWING COSTS OF HEALTH CARE AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS	11
WISCONSIN RESIDENTS STRONGLY OPPOSE STATE BENEFITS FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS	15
POLL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	19

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## INTRODUCTION

The following report presents results from the twenty-eighth statewide survey of Wisconsin residents commissioned by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, Inc. (WPRI). The survey was conducted from December 2 to December 3, 2007. The topics discussed with residents included questions about their views on ethical standards in state government, the power of voters to influence state issues and spending, whose interests they think elected officials represent, term limits for elected officials, support for a state government-run health insurance system in Wisconsin and their opinions on driver's licenses, in-state tuition and public schooling for illegal immigrants. Tracking questions on the direction of the state and nation as well as on the Wisconsin economy were also included.

The first survey was conducted in January 1988, and the focus of the survey was on a series of statewide issues of continuing interest to WPRI. These issues included taxes, the state welfare system, public education, and crime and the criminal justice system. One purpose of this first survey was to establish a set of benchmark measures of public attitudes, so that changes in these attitudes could be tracked over time.

The second survey, conducted the first week after schools reopened from summer vacation in 1988, returned to a number of questions asked seven months earlier. However, additional questions were asked on each topic and several new issues dealing with environmental problems were added.

The third survey was conducted from January 5 through January 10, 1989. It examined the same general issues as in previous surveys, with some new topics and questions added.

The fourth survey was conducted from September 5 through September 10, 1989. Once again it examined the same general issues as the first three surveys, as well as several new issues including abortion, recycling programs and American Indian treaty rights.

The fifth survey was conducted from January 2 through January 5, 1990. The issues examined in this survey included taxes, the state welfare system, public education, and crime and the criminal justice system, all of which were addressed in the first four surveys. New issues consisted of recommendations to improve the quality of education in Wisconsin schools, residents' satisfaction level with efforts to reduce the sale and use of illegal drugs, and drug testing in the schools and workplace.

The sixth survey was conducted from September 4 through September 7, 1990. The issues examined in this survey included taxes, the environment, and crime, all topics covered in earlier surveys. New issues addressed included interest in governmental reform in Wisconsin, gun control and state action to reduce dependence on oil.

The seventh survey was conducted from January 4 through January 10, 1991. New issues examined in this survey included attitudes toward affirmative action and college scholarships, support for recommendations of the Commission on Schools in the 21st Century, ethics in state government, and evaluations of the performance of major state institutions. Issues covered in earlier surveys, and in this one as well, included school choice, crime, gun control and governmental reform.

The eighth survey was conducted from September 3 through 9, 1991. New topics covered in this survey included attitudes about property taxes and property tax reform, residents' views about how safe the streets in their communities are during the day and night, and attitudes towards the police. Topics covered in previous surveys and revisited in this one included crime, the environment, nuclear power, landfills and the performance of major state institutions.

The ninth survey was conducted from January 2 through 5, 1992. The survey featured numerous questions on the state of the economy and personal finances some of which were compared to the results of a national study conducted by the Gordon S. Black Corporation for the Gannett News Survey and USA Today in December 1991. The survey also included questions on education and welfare, both topics covered in earlier WPRI polls.

The tenth survey was conducted from November 15 through November 18, 1992. In addition to questions on the economy, taxes, state spending, and education, the survey explored the attitudes of Wisconsin residents about political reform, legalized gambling and American Indians.

The eleventh survey was conducted from May 20 through May 23, 1993. The survey included questions on the economy, property taxes, state spending, and the environment. The survey also explored, for the first time, the public's knowledge about and views of public officeholders in Wisconsin and their views about health care and insurance.

The twelfth survey was conducted from November 7 through November 14, 1993. The survey included questions on the economy, political institutions, public figures, health care reform and crime.

The thirteenth survey was conducted from July 18 through July 26, 1994. The survey focused on welfare and crime and included questions on state support for education, school choice, and the economy.

The fourteenth survey was conducted from September 5 through September 12, 1995. The survey included questions on views of public officials, candidate preferences for the 1996 presidential election, affirmative action, crime, and the economy.

Conducted from September 16 through September 21, 1996, the fifteenth survey included questions about the 1996 presidential election, the 1998 races for governor and U.S. Senator, views of public figures, Indian casino gambling, welfare reform, educational choice, and the economy.

The sixteenth survey was conducted from July 7 through July 13, 1997. The survey examined residents' views about the 1998 races for governor and U.S. Senators, views of public figures, abortion (including the proposed ban on "partial birth abortions"), Indian casino gambling, the death penalty, and the economy.

Residents' views about the 1998 races for governor and U.S. Senator, public figures, educational choice, welfare reform, and parole reform, and investment behavior were examined in the seventeenth survey. This survey was conducted from July 7 through July 18, 1998.

The eighteenth survey was conducted from July 22 through July 28, 1999. The survey explored residents' views about the 2000 race for president, public figures, spending on prisons and other state programs, state financial support for a new football stadium for the Green Bay Packers, and investment behavior.

The nineteenth survey was conducted from June 26 through June 30, 2000. This survey explored residents' views about the 2000 race for president, public figures, gasoline prices, the Wisconsin economy, and investment behavior.

Residents' views about the 2000 election for president and state senate, Indian casino gambling and support for off-reservation casinos were examined in the twentieth survey. The survey was conducted from October 18 through October 21, 2000.

The twenty-first survey was conducted from July 30 through August 2, 2001. This survey explored residents' views about the 2002 statewide elections, 2004 presidential election, public figures, education, cell phones, and the Wisconsin economy and investment behavior.

The twenty-second survey was conducted from September 26 through September 29, 2002, shortly after the one-year anniversary of 9/11. Among the topics covered were residents' views about the 2002 statewide elections, health insurance, water quality, the Wisconsin economy, and investment behavior.

The twenty-third survey explored residents' views about public figures including President George W. Bush and former governor Tommy Thompson, major issues facing the state, local property taxes, health care, the Wisconsin economy and investment behavior. This survey was conducted from October 6 through October 12, 2003.

The twenty-fourth survey was conducted from September 22 to September 26, 2004. The topics discussed with residents included their preferences in the presidential and senate contests, views about state spending and taxes, health care, and their views of public officials and people in a diverse set of occupations.

The twenty-fifth survey was conducted in October 2005. Issues polled included their preferences in the 2006 Wisconsin race for governor, views about limits on state spending and taxes, photo identification for voting, smoking bans, and residents' views of the ethics of various levels of government in the state.

The twenty-sixth survey was conducted from June 18 to June 19, 2006. The topics discussed with residents included their preferences in the 2006 Wisconsin race for governor, views about limits on state spending and taxes, UW system admission policies and racial preferences, their willingness to reelect incumbent politicians, their views of the ethics of various levels of government in the state, smoking bans, campaign financing, and the death penalty.

The twenty-seventh survey was conducted between September 20 and September 21, 2006. This poll asked likely Wisconsin voters their preferences in the 2006 Wisconsin gubernatorial race, their opinions on the direction of the state and nation and the state of Wisconsin's economy. In addition they were asked about their support for the death penalty and what they identified as the most important problem facing Wisconsin that state government should be doing something about.

### **The Objectives of the Research**

The objectives of this wave of WPRI's ongoing research program continue to be measurement of residents' attitudes on emerging and topical issues and to track change in attitudes on selected topics over time.

As was found in earlier surveys, attitudes on some issues have changed very little since the last wave. On other issues, there have been significant changes in attitudes and concerns.

### **The Methodology for the Study**

The data in this report are based on a randomly selected sample of 600 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. 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.

A survey of 600 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.

### **Diversified Research**

Dr. Michael LaVelle, President of Diversified Research, a nationally known survey research company, supervised the project. Dr. LaVelle has a Ph.D. and has taught statistics and social research methods at the university level. He has been President of Diversified Research since 1982 and has over 30 years' experience in survey research.

## **WISCONSIN RESIDENTS VERY DISILLUSIONED WITH THEIR STATE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

*~They Are Very Pessimistic About the Direction of the State and the State's Economy~*

*~A Large Majority Now View Themselves as Political Independents and Strongly Favor Term Limits for State Elected Officials~*

The views of Wisconsin residents toward their state and political establishments are reaching all time lows in Wisconsin Policy Research Institute (WPRI) polling. Only 11% of Wisconsin residents believe the state's economy will improve over the next year, while just 19% believe their family's economic situation will improve in the upcoming year. Only 34% believe that the state is heading the right direction, while 56% believe it is on the wrong track.

Politically things are even worse: only 30% have a favorable view of George Bush, while just 41% have a positive view of Governor Jim Doyle. These numbers are actually high when one considers survey respondents' views on the ethical make up of state government. Only 2% believe they can trust state government to do what is right almost all the time. Just 6% believe that the ethics of the state legislature have gotten better over the last decade. Just 12% believe that voters have the power to determine what their state government spends, 82% believe that it is lobbying groups. Only 7% believe the ethics of state government have gotten better during the last ten years.

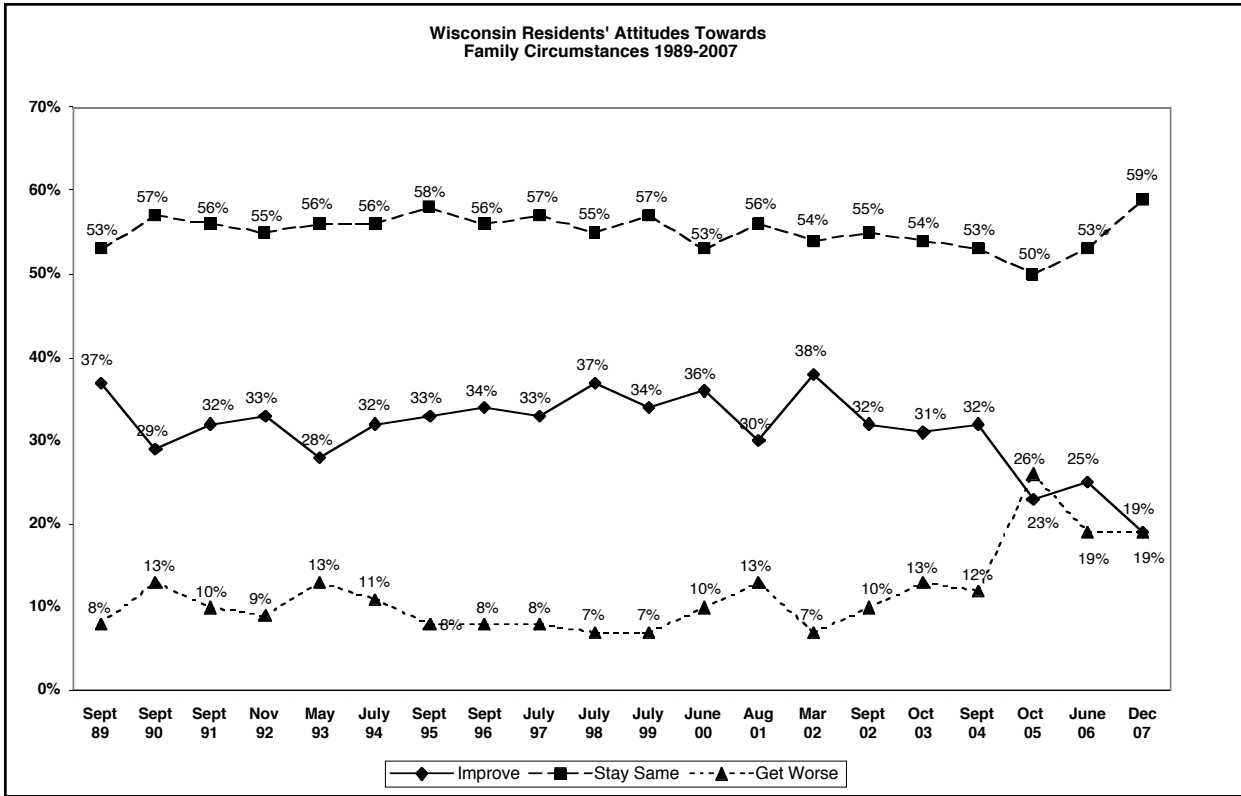
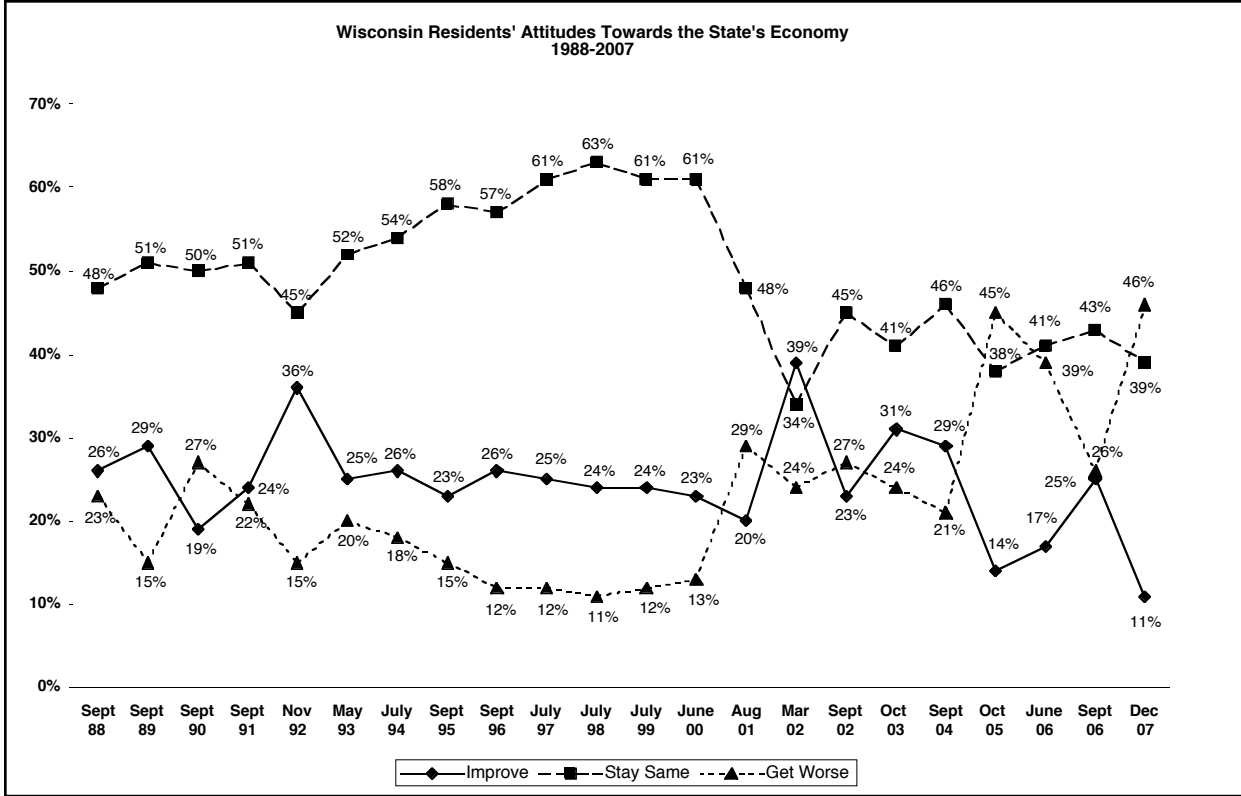
Politically 40% of Wisconsin residents now view themselves as Independents, significantly above the 29% who consider themselves Democrats and the 25% who consider themselves Republican. An overwhelming 72% of Wisconsin residents now favor a constitutional change to limit all state elected officials to no more than eight years in office.

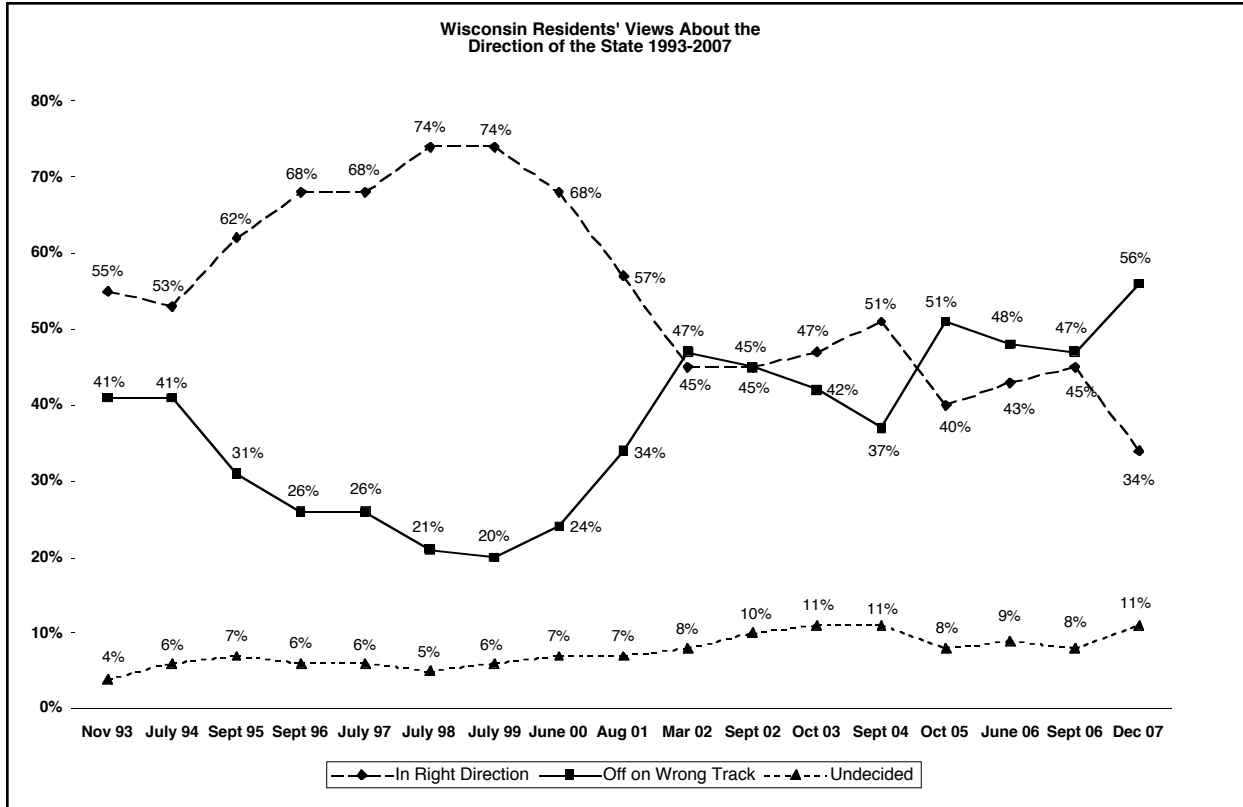
### **The State's Economy**

Only 11% of Wisconsin's residents thought that the state's economy would improve over the next year, while 46% said that it would get worse. These are the lowest results in the twenty years WPRI has been polling the state of Wisconsin. Pessimism was greatest in Green Bay, La Crosse/Eau Claire and the Racine/Kenosha area where only 6% of the respondents said the economy would improve, while in Madison only 8% thought the state's economy would improve. Ideologically only 8% of Liberals thought the economy would improve, only 5% of Blacks were optimistic and, perhaps the most startling number, only 8% of women were optimistic about the state's economy improving over the next year compared to 14% of male respondents. Respondent's concerns for their own family economic circumstances over the next year were only slightly better with 19% thinking their family would improve, while 19% thought it would get worse. These are some of the lowest numbers in twenty years of tracking this poll question. It was lowest in Madison where only 10% were optimistic. In Racine/Kenosha optimism was at 13% and in La Crosse 14%. There was a large split between males and females; only 15% of women thought their family's economic situation would improve over the next year compared to 24% of men.

### **Direction of the State**

Thirty-four percent of Wisconsin residents believe the state is going in the right direction, while 56% believe it has gotten off on the wrong track. While these numbers are very bad news for the state, they are actually better than Wisconsinites' views about the country. Only 19% thought the country was going in the right direction and 76% thought it was on the wrong track. The Wisconsin right direction numbers are interesting because the most pessimistic people live in the city of Milwaukee, where only 22% thought the state was going in the right direction, while in the Milwaukee suburbs only 18% thought the state was going in the right direction. The wrong track in Milwaukee was 76% and it was 74% in the Milwaukee suburbs. There was almost no demographic group that thought the state was going in the right direction. It is not surprising that, politically, the President and the Governor also did not do well in the survey. George Bush's political standing is at an all time low in Wisconsin, only 30% of our respondents have a favorable view of him, while 61% have an unfavorable view. These are the lowest numbers we have ever recorded on the President going back to July 1999. Jim Doyle's favorability is at 41%, while his unfavorables are at 37%. Clearly these are much better numbers than those of President Bush, but they are hardly awe-inspiring.





### View of State Government and State Politics

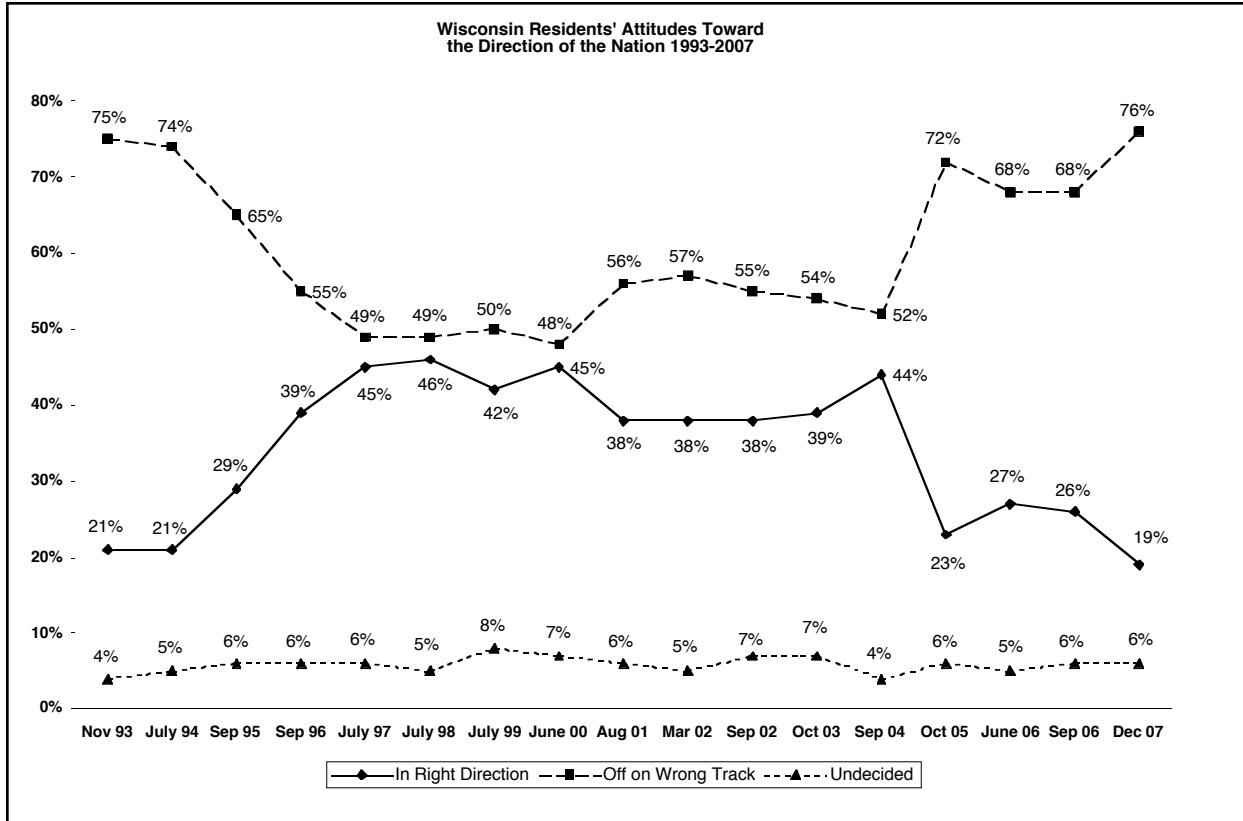
We asked one question about state spending. Did respondents think state government spent too much, too little, or just about the right amount of tax dollars? Sixty-two percent thought they spent too much, only 11% thought they spent too little, and 17% said they thought they spent the right amount. We then asked whether or not they thought Wisconsin taxpayers received good value for the state taxes they pay. Thirty-three percent thought they received a good value, while 55% thought they received a poor value.

We asked who had the most power over state government spending? Eighty-two percent said lobbying groups have the most power to determine what state government spends while only 12% said voters have the most power to determine state spending.

We also asked specific questions about how residents felt about the ethics in state government and politics. The question was asked whether residents thought the standard of ethics in Wisconsin state government had gotten better, worse or stayed the same in the last ten years? Only 7% thought it had gotten better, 50% thought it was worse and 38% thought it had stayed the same. We asked whether the standard of ethics of the members of the state legislature had changed over the last decade. Only 6% thought the standard of ethics of members of the state legislature had gotten better, 44% thought it had gotten worse and 43% thought it had stayed about the same. We asked respondents whose interests they thought their elected officials represented the most — their interests, special interests or the politician's own interests. Only 10% thought that their elected officials represented the voters' interests; 43% thought they represented special interests, and 42% thought they represented the elected official's interests.

Finally we asked how much of the time do you think you can trust state government to do what is right — just about always, most of the time or only some of the time? Only 2% of the respondents to this survey thought that their state government would do what is right just about always. Twenty-four percent said most of the time, while 70% said only some of the time.





### RESIDENTS' VIEWS OF MAJOR PUBLIC FIGURES 1993-2007

	May 1993	Nov 1993	Sept 1995	Sept 1996	July 1997	July 1998	July 1999	June 2000	Aug 2001	March 2002	Sept 2002	Oct 2003	Sept 2004	Oct 2005	June 2006	Sept 2006	Dec 2007
<b>George W. Bush</b>																	
Favorable	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	56%	50%	50%	75%	59%	50%	53%	43%	37%	40%	30%
Unfavorable	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	22%	36%	43%	20%	35%	45%	42%	51%	59%	51%	61%
Neutral/Did Not Recognize Name	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	22%	14%	7%	5%	6%	4%	4%	6%	4%	9%	8%
<b>Jim Doyle</b>																	
Favorable	30%	29%	37%	29%	35%	40%	36%	37%	33%	32%	41%	45%	46%	46%	44%	41%	41%
Unfavorable	11%	10%	18%	17%	17%	12%	13%	15%	16%	20%	28%	32%	33%	38%	38%	41%	37%
Neutral/Did Not Recognize Name	59%	61%	45%	54%	48%	48%	51%	48%	51%	48%	31%	22%	21%	16%	17%	18%	21%

N.A.: Not asked

**RESIDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LOCAL SPENDING AND TAXES**

	Jan 1988	Sept 1988	Jan 1989	Sept 1990	Sept 1991	Jan 1992	Nov 1992	May 1993	Aug 2001	March 2002	Oct 2003	Sept 2004	Dec 2007
<b>State Government Spending of Tax Dollars</b>													
Too Much	53%	53%	52%	47%	N.A.	59%	49%	N.A.	54%	59%	N.A.	59%	62%
About Right	31%	29%	28%	37%	N.A.	21%	27%	N.A.	28%	24%	N.A.	28%	17%
Too Little	6%	5%	7%	7%	N.A.	8%	8%	N.A.	7%	8%	N.A.	6%	11%
<b>Value Received by Wisconsin Taxpayers for State Taxes</b>													
Good Value	N.A.	N.A.	46%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	33%
Poor Value	N.A.	N.A.	41%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	55%
Neither	N.A.	N.A.	7%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	7%
Don't Know	N.A.	N.A.	6%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	5%

N.A.: Not asked.

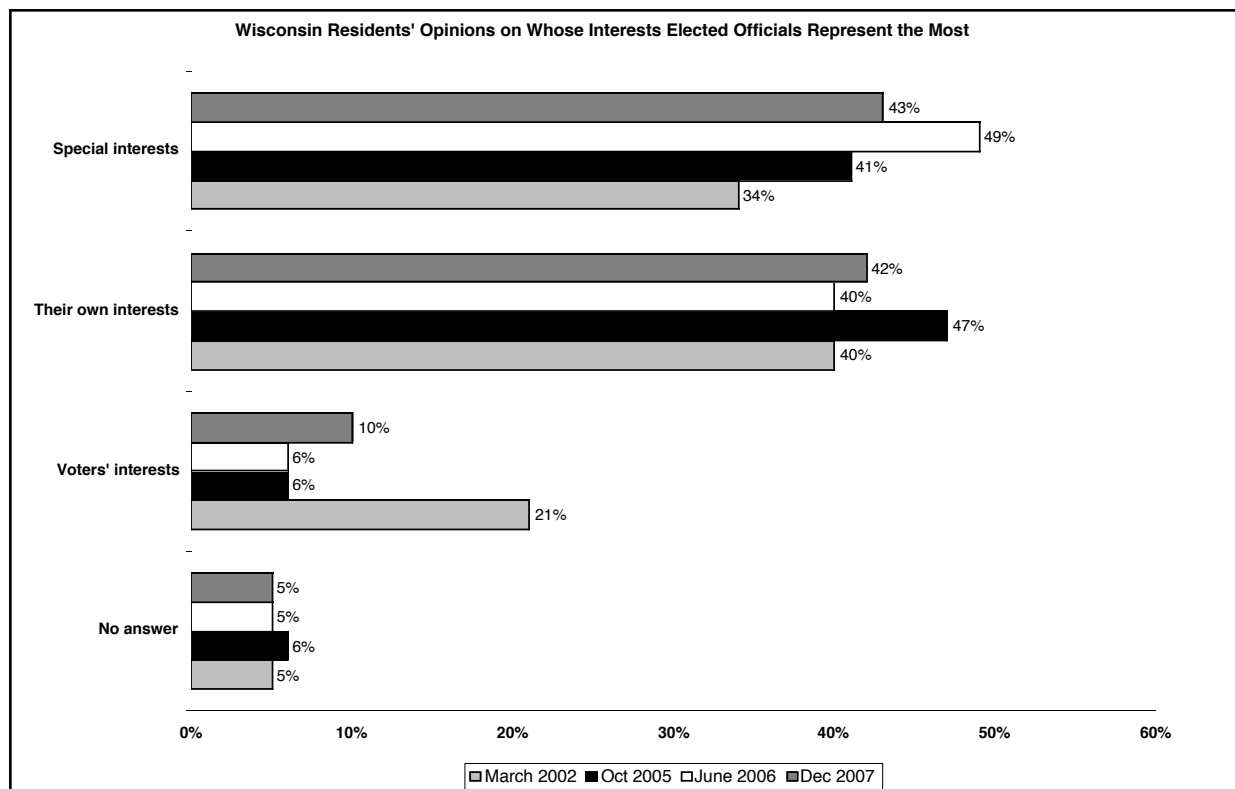
**ATTITUDE TOWARD STATE GOVERNMENT, 1990-2007**

	Sept 1990	Jan 1991	Nov 1991	Nov 1993	Sept 2002	June 2006	Dec 2007
<b>Who Has the Most Power to Determine What the State Government Spends?</b>							
Voters	17%	17%	19%	17%	18%	12%	12%
Lobbying Groups	77%	79%	77%	79%	75%	81%	82%
<b>How Much of the Time Can You Trust State Government to do What is Right?</b>							
Just About Always	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	3%	2%	3%	2%
Most of the Time	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	34%	35%	23%	24%
Only Some of the Time	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	62%	61%	74%	70%

N.A. means question not asked in that year.

**OPINION ABOUT ETHICS OF POLITICIANS IN STATE, 1991-2007**

In Last Ten Years, Standards of Ethics Has. . . .	Jan 1991	Sept 1991	May 1993	March 2002	October 2005	June 2006	Dec 2007
<b>Wisconsin State Government</b>							
Gotten Better	9%	12%	3%	5%	9%	5%	7%
Gotten Worse	31%	30%	29%	29%	46%	51%	50%
Stayed the Same	56%	55%	56%	59%	40%	40%	38%
<b>Members of the Wisconsin Legislature</b>							
Gotten Better	10%	10%	6%	7%	5%	5%	6%
Gotten Worse	25%	23%	18%	18%	42%	52%	44%
Stayed the Same	59%	61%	60%	67%	46%	35%	43%



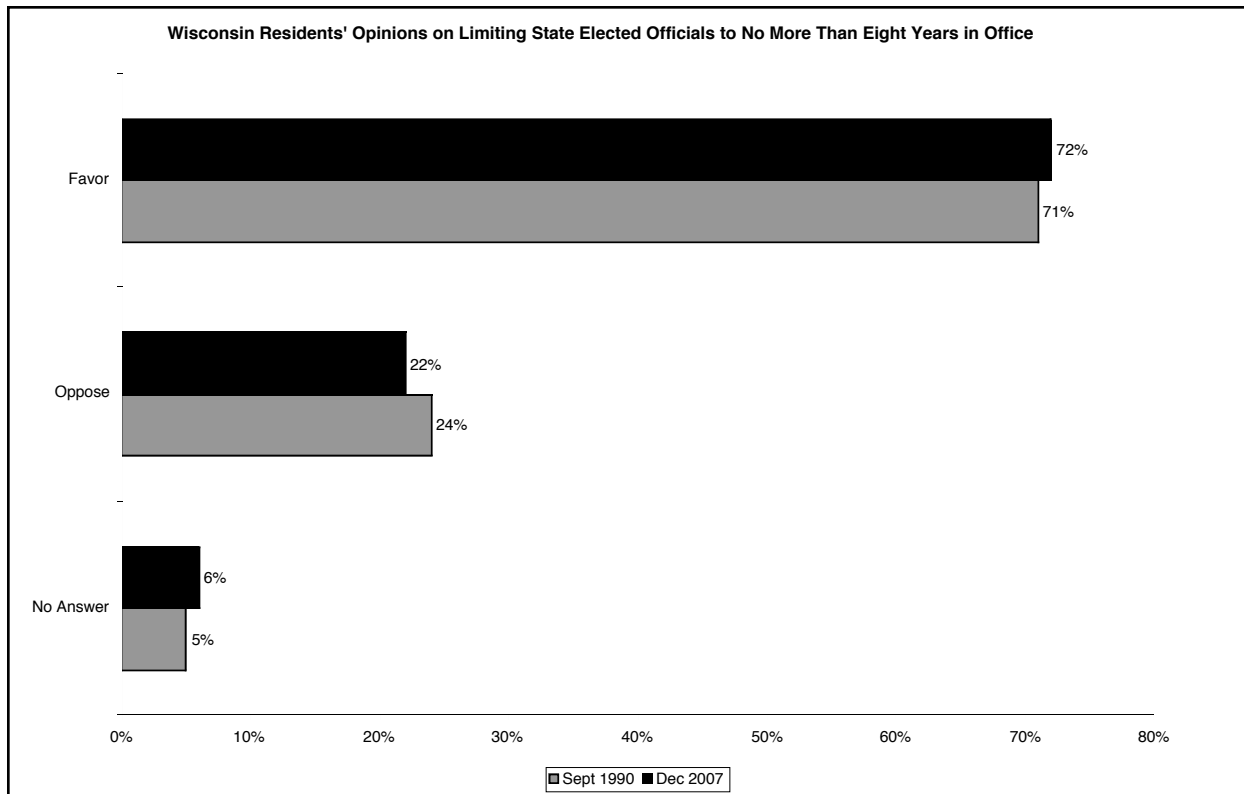
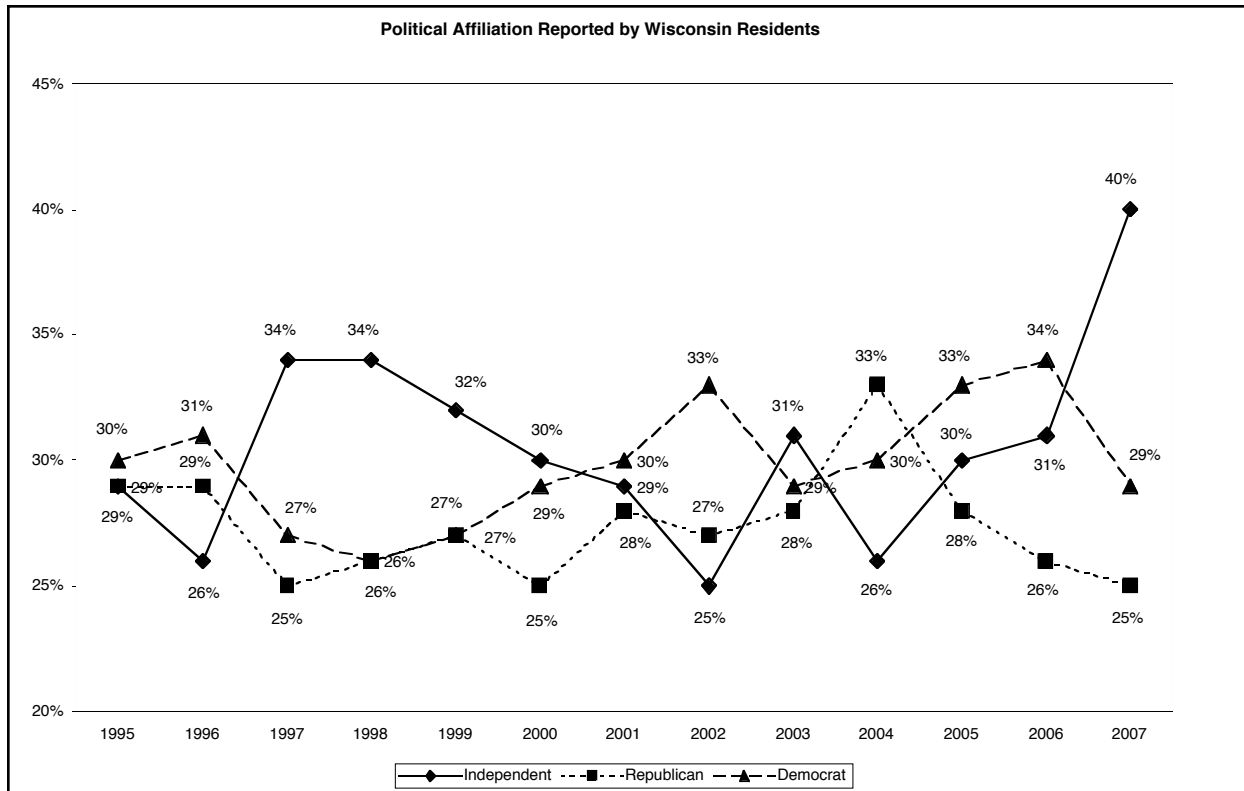
### Political Identification

One of the questions asked since 1995 is whether survey respondents identify themselves as a Republican, a Democrat or an Independent. In this survey 40% said they identified themselves as an Independent, 29% said Democrat and 25% said Republican. Since WPRI began tracking political identification these are the highest numbers for Independents. Demographics were very instructive with some interesting splits. In the Kenosha/Racine area 55% of respondents describe themselves as Independent, as did 47% of those living in the city of Milwaukee. In the Madison area, as well as out-state Wisconsin, 44% also said they were Independent. The only area of the state where Independents trailed the two parties was in La Crosse/Eau Claire where only 20% said they were Independents. Age-wise there were some interesting groupings. Among young people between 18 and 24, 50% said they considered themselves Independent, while among senior citizens 65 or older 42% said they considered themselves Independent. That was a remarkable change considering that senior citizens are usually not thought of as Independents, but rather as traditional members of either the Republican or Democratic Party. Among various religious groups, 43% of Protestants who responded to the question, as opposed to 35% of Catholics, said that they were Independents. One of the more important parts of the demographic profile was gender — 45% of males said that they now considered themselves Independent while 36% of females considered themselves Independent. However, among females 35% said they were Democrats and 22% said they were Republicans, so that Independents still outnumbered each party among women.

In the twelve years WPRI has been tracking this question in Wisconsin this is the first time that Independents have been higher than either political party, and it is substantially higher as the chart on the next page demonstrates.

### Term Limits

Finally we asked residents whether they would favor a state constitutional amendment to limit state elected officials to no more than eight years in office. The result was that 72% favored this idea while only 22% opposed it. There was no demographic group in the state that did not strongly favor some sort of term limits on our elected officials. There was even support from Liberals, with 58% versus 38% opposing, and Democrats where 66% favored the



idea while 38% opposed it. This question was last asked in September 1990 with almost the exact same results. In the 1990 survey 71% favored limiting elected officials to no more than eight years in office and only 24% opposed it. This may be an idea whose time has come.

## Summary

There is little doubt in this poll that something extraordinary is happening in Wisconsin. Years of political neglect by their elected officials are beginning to have a serious toll on the confidence of Wisconsin residents in elected officials and their state government. The lack of optimism is seen in all aspects of life in Wisconsin today, whether it is the state's economy, the ethics of state government and elected officials or the dominance of lobbying in the political process. Wisconsin residents are extremely unhappy and becoming more and more disconnected from their government and the state's politics. The fact that 40% of Wisconsinites identify themselves as political Independents would have been unheard of five years ago. They now see where term limits could be one way of dealing with politicians who seem to have little interest in what their constituents really want or need. The issues of lobbying, state ethics and the state's economy has never been more on the mind of Wisconsin residents. It would not be surprising if, in 2008, Wisconsin voters send a message that will be even louder than the one sent in 2006.

### WISCONSIN RESIDENTS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROWING COSTS OF HEALTH CARE AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Controlling health care and prescription drug costs has become the number one concern of Wisconsin residents in terms of the problem that most needs attention from state government. They favor major reforms to the existing health care system but there is very little support for the idea of a state-run insurance system. In fact, we found a steep fall off from previous years for a Canadian-style health care system being set up in Wisconsin. Finally, Wisconsin residents also believe that if a government-run health insurance system were set up in Wisconsin, out-of-state people would definitely immigrate to Wisconsin to enroll in the system.

#### The Health Insurance Issue

In our most recent poll 30% of Wisconsin residents identified "Controlling Health Care and Prescription Drug Costs" as the most important issue that needs attention from Wisconsin state government. With the exception of Milwaukee suburbs, every single region of the state mentioned it as the number one concern. Green Bay had the most concern with this issue, with 38% identifying it as the number one problem, followed by out-state Wisconsin where it was mentioned by 35% of the population. Politically, it was the number one issue for Democrats (38%) and Independents (34%) while only 14% of Republicans named it as the number one issue. Thirty-one percent of Whites said it was the number one issue compared to only 5% of Blacks; 33% of women named it as their number one issue while only 28% of males did likewise. There is little doubt that there is enormous desire to reform or radically reform the health care system in Wisconsin.

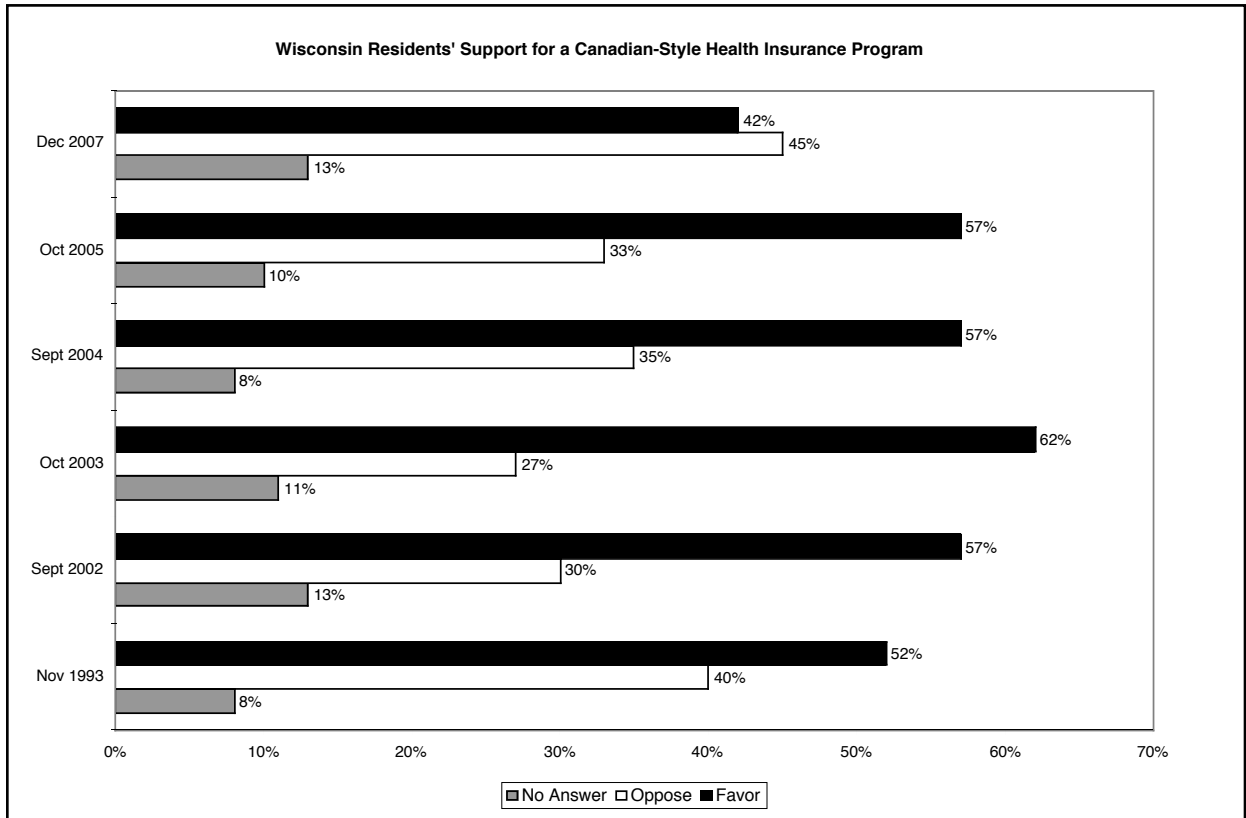
#### ISSUE NEEDING MOST ATTENTION FROM WISCONSIN STATE GOVERNMENT

	June 2000	March 2002	Sept. 2002	Oct. 2003	Sept. 2004	Oct. 2005	June 2006	Dec 2007
<b>Controlling Healthcare and Prescription Drug Costs</b>	N.A.	28%	29%	33%	35%	21%	27%	30%
<b>Reforming the Tax System</b>	24%	20%	21%	17%	12%	14%	17%	21%
<b>Lowering the Wisconsin Gasoline Tax</b>	28%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	24%	15%	16%
<b>Improving Public Education</b>	24%	16%	18%	18%	15%	21%	18%	14%
<b>Improving the Ethics of Wisconsin Politicians and Bureaucrats</b>	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	13%	10%
<b>Improving the State's Economy</b>	N.A.	18%	20%	23%	17%	10%	10%	8%

N.A. Not asked.

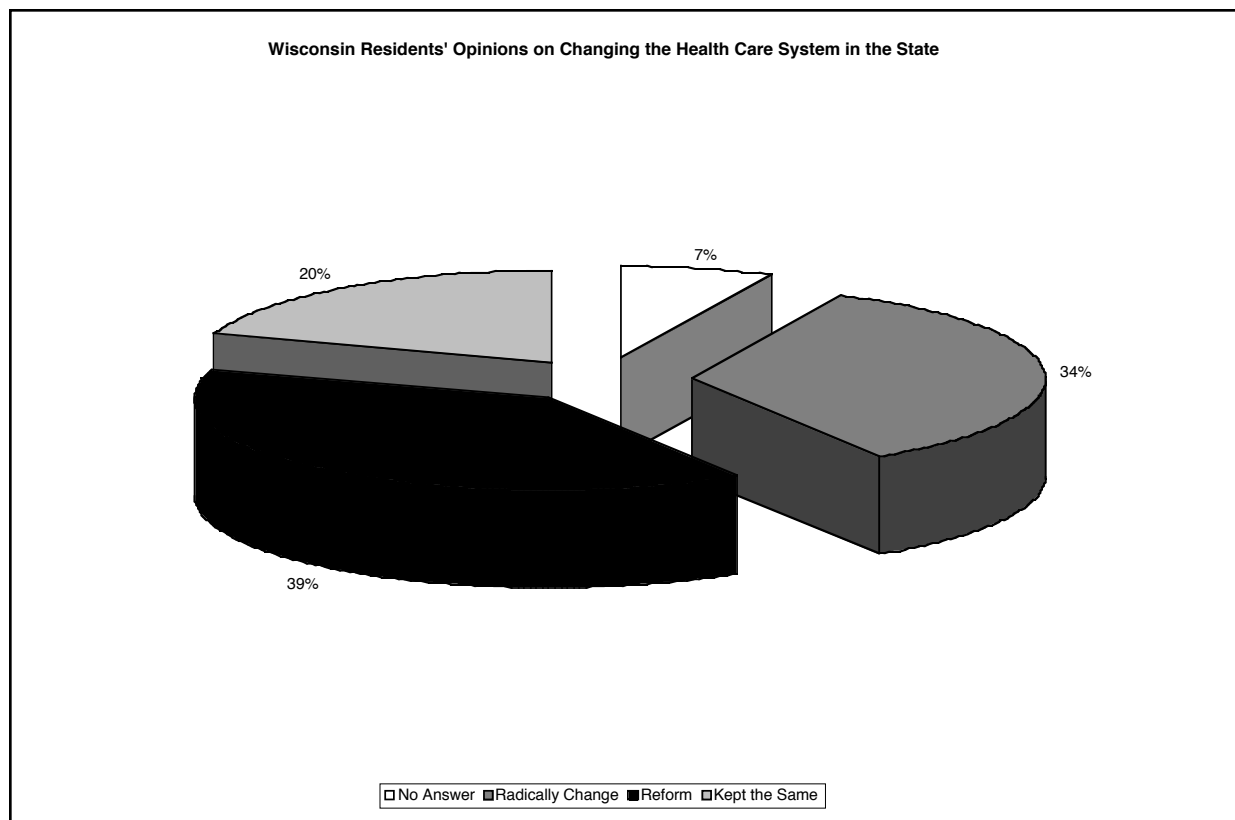
**The Canadian System**

Starting in November 1993 we have periodically tracked the question of whether Wisconsin residents would be interested in adopting a Canadian-style system where the government pays for all costs of health care out of taxes and negotiates directly with doctors and hospitals to set fees. In this poll only 42% of our residents favored it while 45% opposed it. This is a huge drop off in support from our past results. In fact when we asked this same question two years ago (October 2005) 57% of respondents favored it while only 33% opposed it. The largest regions of the state in opposition to this idea were La Crosse/Eau Claire where 59% opposed it, while only 36% favored it, and Waukesha County where 53% opposed it and 40% favored it. In terms of support there were only two regions of the state that favored the idea. One was Madison that had a large plurality of 57% favoring the idea with 30% opposing it and Kenosha/Racine where 46% of the population favored it while 40% opposed it. Politically, 59% of Democrats support the idea while 28% oppose it; among Independents it is 44% favoring it with 40% opposing it. However, among Republicans only 20% favored it with 74% opposing it. Liberals favor the idea by 63% to 26% while Conservatives oppose it 65% to 23%.



**The Call for Reform**

We asked Wisconsin residents whether the current health care system in Wisconsin should be basically kept the same, be reformed or radically changed. Only 20% thought that it should be kept the same, while 39% favored reform and 34% favored radical change. It is pretty fair to say that 73% of the respondents in this survey want major changes made in our health care system. Across the state, support for keeping the same system is constant in all regions. Strangely enough the place with least support for keeping the same system is Madison, where only 13% of respondents favor the current system. Statewide, there were some slight differences by gender with 24% of males favoring keeping the same system while 16% of females wanted to keep the status quo.

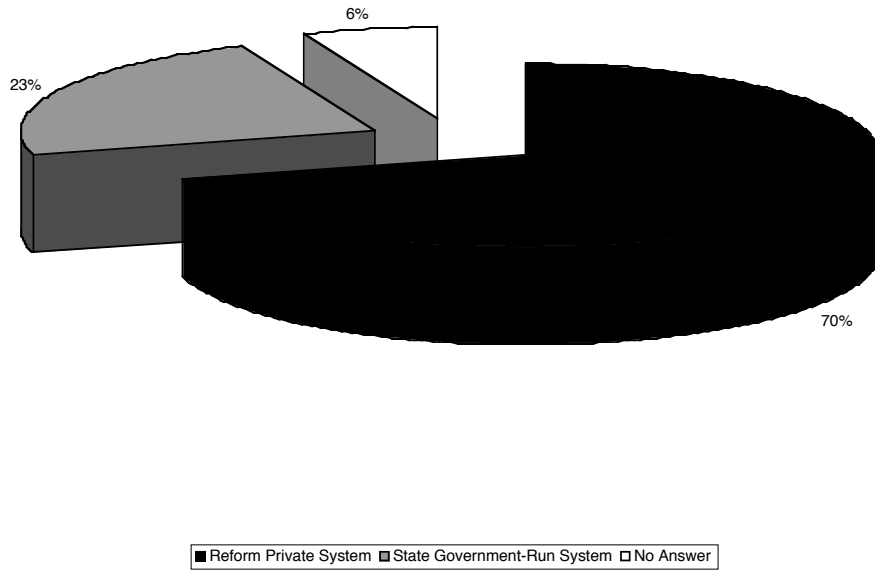


We asked respondents their opinions on two possible ways of changing our current health care system. The first was to reform health care by replacing the current private health insurance system with a universal health insurance system run by the Wisconsin state government. The alternative was to reform the current private system by cutting costs and increasing competition among insurance companies and by requiring health care providers to publicly release their actual costs. Only 23% supported the idea of a new health insurance system run by the state, while 70% of the respondents supported the idea of cutting costs and providing more choices in the private sector and among private insurance companies. Not one geographic area of Wisconsin supports a state government-run system. The strongest support came from La Crosse/Eau Claire with 37% of the respondents supporting it and Southeast Wisconsin with 32%. The largest opposition came from the city of Milwaukee where only 8% supported a state-run system while 86% supported reforming the private system. This was closely followed by Waukesha County where 14% supported the idea of a government-run system and 79% supported reforming the private system. There were few differences among other demographic groups on this question.

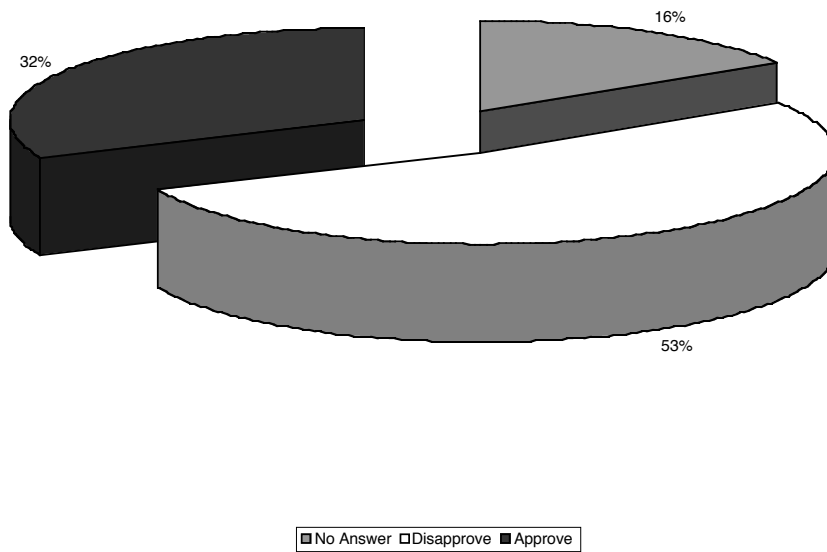
### Wisconsin Legislation

We asked a question that dealt with a state Senate proposal to replace Wisconsin's current private health insurance system with a universal health insurance system controlled by the state government. Only 32% of the residents of the state approved that idea while 53% disapproved it. On this particular question there were far more demographic differences than there were on the previous question. Across the state there was actually approval for this idea in the Madison area with 46% supporting it and 38% opposing it. This was the only area of the state where there was any support for this idea. In the La Crosse/Eau Claire area only 20% supported the idea with 57% opposing it. In the city of Milwaukee only 28% supported it while 54% opposed it. In out-state Wisconsin only 28% approved this idea of the state running a universal health insurance system while 57% opposed it. Politically it was supported by 52% of Democrats with 29% opposing while 81% of Republicans disapproved the idea and only 12% approved it. Among Independents 53% disapproved with only 31% approving this idea. Ideologically 56% of Liberals approved it, 34% disapproved while 69% of Conservatives disapproved and only 17% approved it.

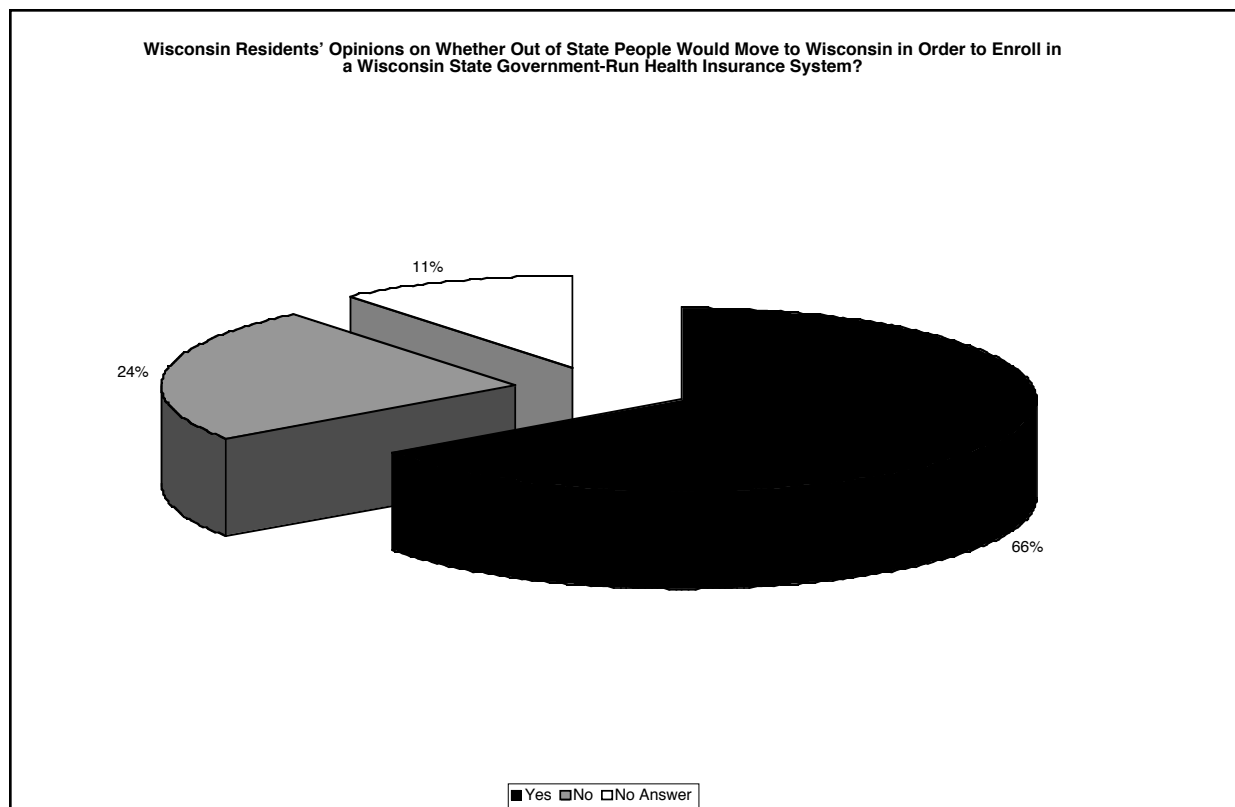
Wisconsin Residents' Opinions on Best Way to Reform Health Care System in State



Wisconsin Residents' Opinions on Replacing Wisconsin's Private Health Insurance System with a Universal System Controlled by State Government







### Health Care Immigration

Finally in health care we asked whether Wisconsin residents thought out-of-state people would move to Wisconsin in order to enroll if Wisconsin established a government-run health insurance system — 66% said yes, while only 24% said no. Those who thought there would be health care migration crossed all demographic lines. There was no one group in the state who thought this would not happen.

### Summary

There is little question from our survey work this year and in previous years that reforming the health care system is the top agenda item for Wisconsin residents. It is also clear from polling this year — unlike previous years — that there is little support for any sort of government-run health insurance plan in the state. Residents strongly think that there should be reforms, even radical reforms, to the current private system, but they have very little confidence or desire to have the state step in and mandate any sort of government-run plan. Finally one issue that may become a major debating point on health care reform is the question of some sort of a health care migration to Wisconsin from other states. This would be particularly true if the state were to establish a health insurance program that allowed no exclusions for pre-existing conditions. Most Wisconsinites believe that this would definitely result in people from out-of-state moving to Wisconsin to obtain this important benefit.

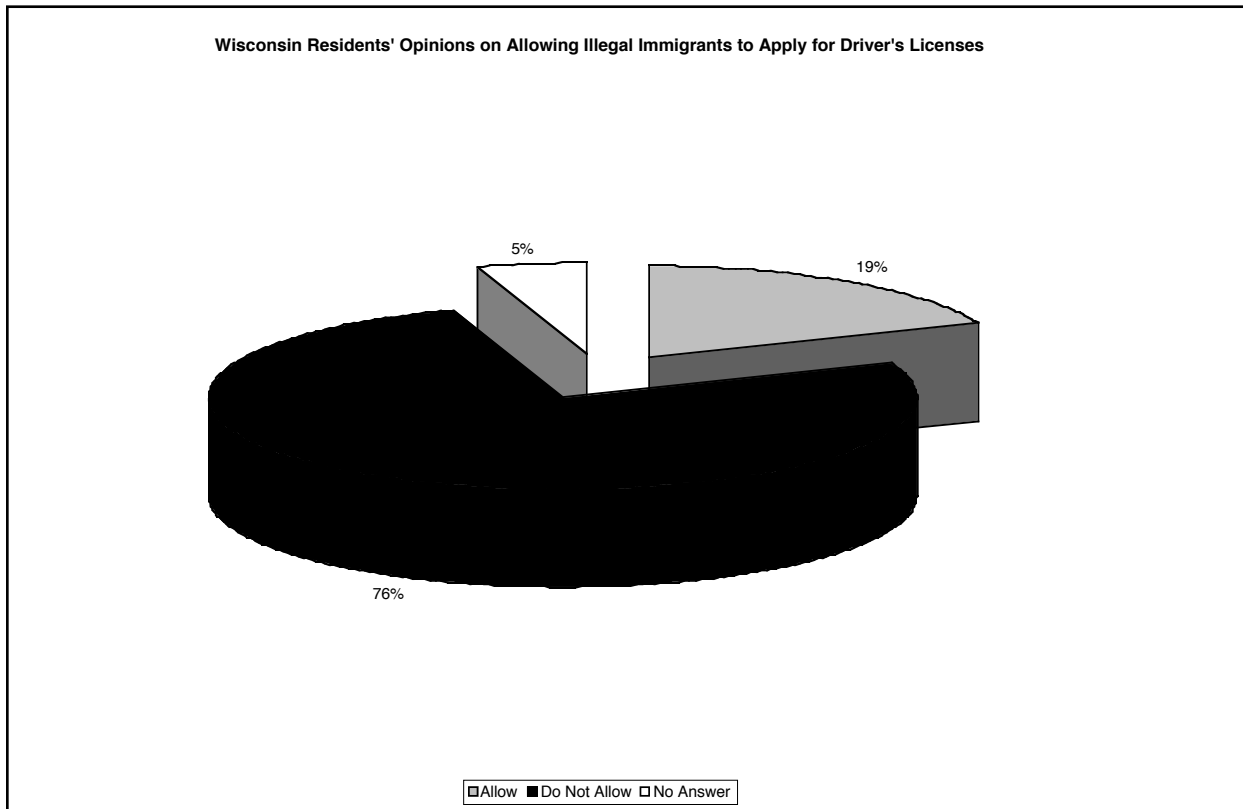
### WISCONSIN RESIDENTS STRONGLY OPPOSE STATE BENEFITS FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

As the issue of illegal immigration is discussed throughout Wisconsin, a new survey finds little support for allowing illegal immigrants to receive a number of Wisconsin benefits. Wisconsin residents overwhelmingly oppose allowing illegal immigrants to apply for Wisconsin driver's licenses by a margin of 76% to 19%. On the question of allowing illegal immigrants to receive discounted tuition at the University of Wisconsin, 86% oppose the idea while

only 10% support it. It is only in the area of allowing illegal immigrant children to attend local public schools that there is some serious movement. On this issue 46% of Wisconsin residents favor it, while 46% oppose it.

**Driver's Licenses**

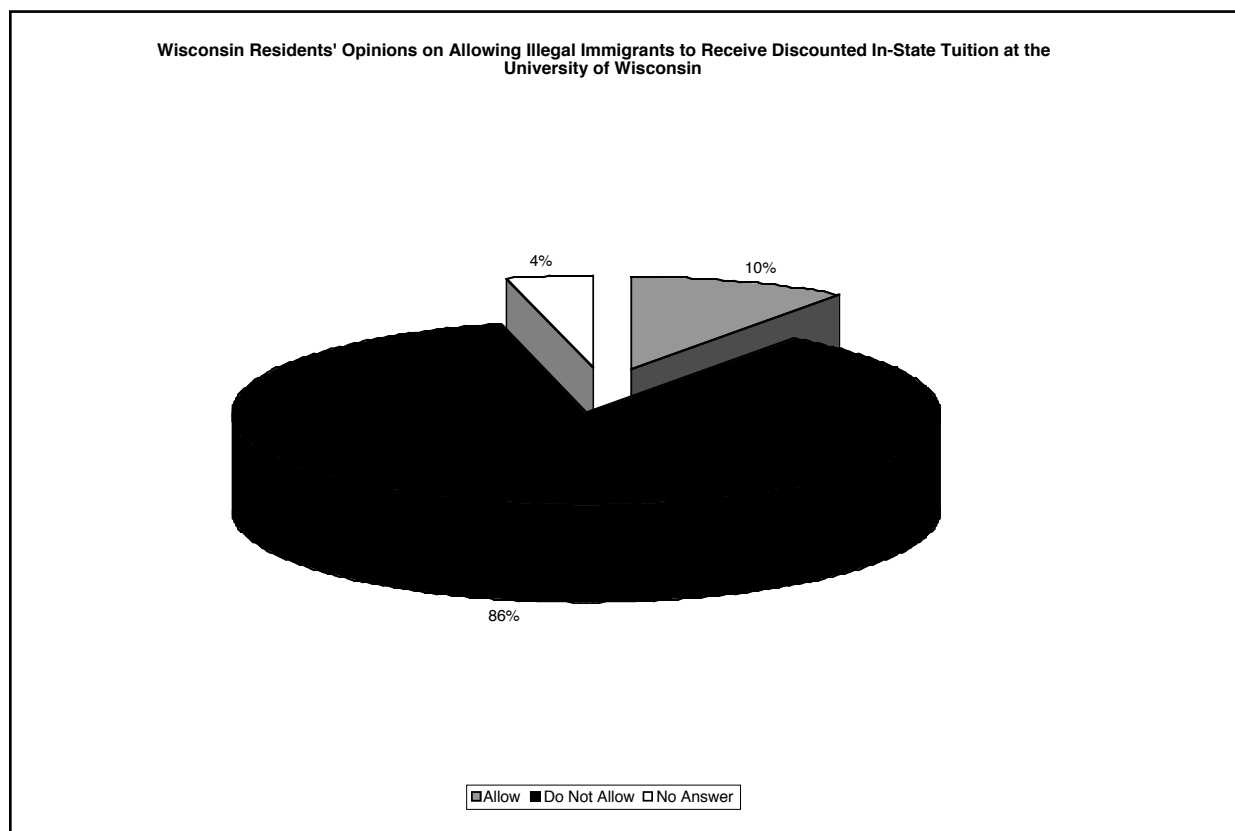
Seventy-six percent of Wisconsin residents opposed allowing illegal immigrants to apply for state driver's licenses. Only 19% supported the idea. The most support for this issue came from Madison, where it was only opposed by 49% to 48%, and La Crosse and Eau Claire where the opposition was 65% to 32%. In Green Bay, however, 87% of the population opposed allowing illegal immigrants to apply for driver's licenses and only 6% supported the idea. Politically the support was reasonably constant: 12% of Republicans supported the idea, 19% of the Democrats did and 24% of the Independents supported the idea of allowing illegal immigrants to apply for driver's licenses. Among Liberals the support was dead even – 48% supporting it and 48% opposing it. However, among Conservatives those numbers change radically. Only 8% of Conservatives supported the idea, while 88% opposed it. The only real support in the state for allowing illegal immigrants to apply for driver's licenses came from young people between the ages of 18 and 24, where 64% favored the idea while only 36% opposed it. In every other major age group there was uniform opposition to the idea of allowing illegal immigrants to apply for Wisconsin driver's licenses. There were also different views among racial groups: 16% of Whites supported the idea while 37% of Blacks supported it. Among men, 16% supported it and among women, 20% supported it.



**University of Wisconsin Tuition**

Wisconsin residents were asked whether illegal immigrants should be able to receive discounted in-state tuition at the University of Wisconsin. Eighty-six percent of respondents opposed this idea while only 10% approved it. The most support for this idea was in Madison, where 27% supported it, and La Crosse/Eau Claire where 25% supported it. The most opposition came from out-state, rural areas where only 3% of the people supported it while 93%

opposed it. There was very little difference in support for this idea politically. Democrats supported it with only 13%, while 83% disagreed. Among Republicans, it was 7% favoring it and 93% opposing it. Among Independents, only 10% favored it while 84% opposed it. Even ideologically there was very little support. Among Liberals, 30% supported it while 64% opposed it. Among Conservatives, 97% opposed it while only 1% supported it. There were some definite splits based on race: only 7% of Whites favored the idea of discounted in-state tuition for illegal immigrants at UW, while 40% of Black respondents supported the idea. Among young people 18-24, 46% supported it while 55% opposed it. At the same time, only 4% of Wisconsin senior citizens supported the idea while 92% opposed it. Among women, 12% favored it, while 8% of men supported the idea. Except for a few key demographic groups, there was very little support for this idea throughout the state.

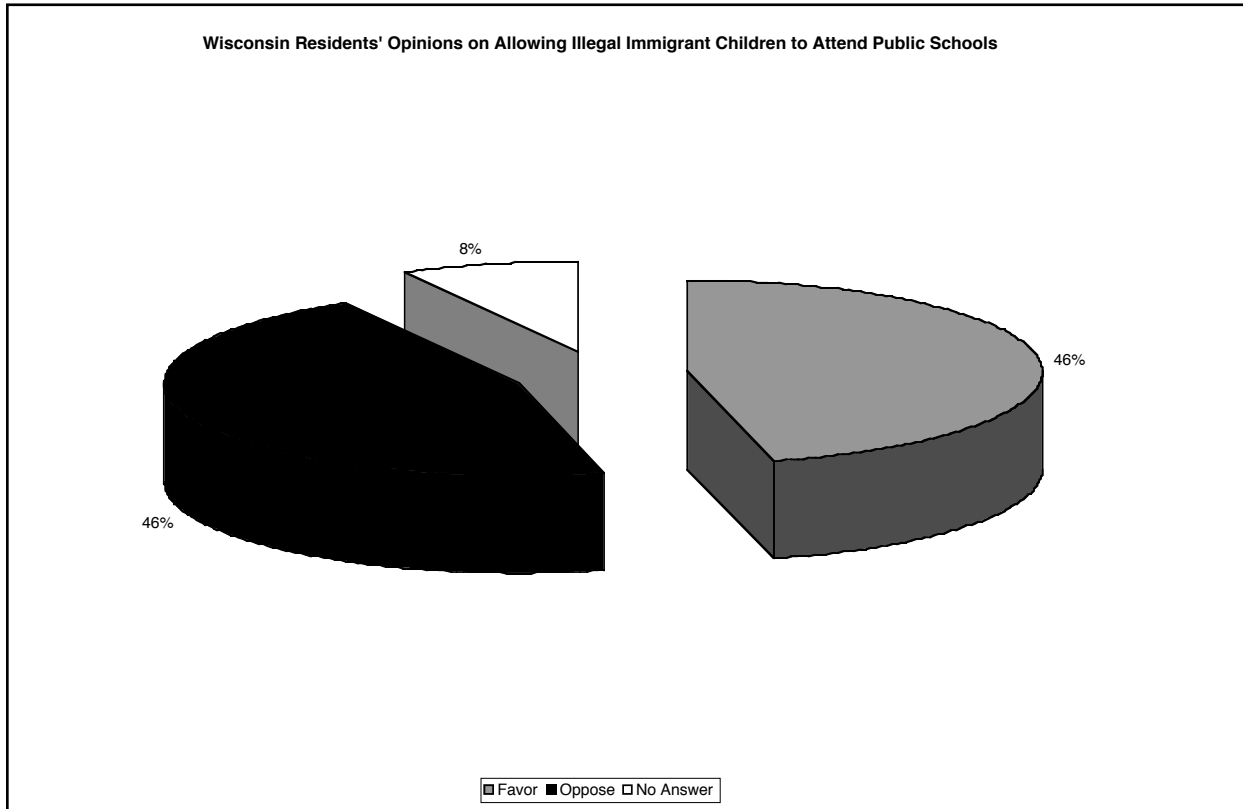


## Public Education

It was on the issue of allowing illegal immigrant children to attend local public schools that the numbers dramatically changed. On this issue, 46% of the state favored the idea of sending these children to local public schools while an equal amount of residents (46%) opposed it. There were some dramatic differences depending of where you lived in the state. In the Milwaukee area there was more opposition than support for the idea. In the city of Milwaukee, 47% opposed it while 44% favored it. In the Milwaukee suburbs support dropped to 36%, while 56% opposed it. In Green Bay, 53% of residents opposed this idea, while 32% supported it. The major support for the idea of allowing illegal immigrant children to attend local public schools came in La Crosse/Eau Claire where 72% favored it while 28% opposed it and in Madison where 61% favored it while 33% opposed it.

Not surprisingly there were some key differences among political and ideological groupings. Among Republicans, 33% supported this while 62% opposed it. However, among Democrats the numbers shifted to 55% favoring idea while 35% opposed it. Among Independents it was almost split with 48% favoring it while 45% opposed it. Ideologically, not surprisingly, there was a huge fault line: 77% of Wisconsin residents who said they were Liberal supported this idea, while only 30% of Conservative respondents supported it. Once again, among younger people there was overwhelming support for this idea with 91% of residents between 18 and 24 supporting it and only

9% opposing it. There was also some support for this idea among senior citizens with 49% of people over 65 supporting it with 42% opposing it. The major group that opposed it was residents between the ages and 35 and 44, with 64% opposing it while only 31% favored it. Among Black respondents 55% supported the idea while only 46% of Whites did likewise. Among men, 41% supported the idea of allowing illegal immigrant children to attend local public schools while 51% opposed it. These numbers were almost inverted among women where 51% of female respondents favored the idea while only 41% opposed it.



## Summary

The issue of illegal immigration, which is being discussed at the state level throughout the country, offers some interesting contrasts in Wisconsin. There is very little support for allowing illegal immigrants to apply for state driver's licenses or become eligible for in-state tuition at the University of Wisconsin. However, there is a dramatic shift on the question of allowing illegal immigrant children to attend our local public schools. What is important in the wording of this question is that we very specifically asked about illegal immigrant children. What should be understood about this issue is that many children of illegal immigrants are in fact American citizens and are entitled to local public education. Wisconsin residents apparently understand the difference. We believe that what makes this education issue different from the other two is that we are talking about children and not adults. Adults are the ones most likely to apply for driver's licenses or attend the University of Wisconsin. It is younger children who many Wisconsin residents believe ought to be given similar opportunities to legal residents. This sharp fault line may become very important as this issue is debated in Wisconsin, but for the time being there is no doubt that there is very little support for allowing major benefits for illegal immigrants among Wisconsin residents.

## POLL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Based on what you know or have heard about the economy of Wisconsin, do you expect state economic conditions to improve, stay the same, or get worse during the next year?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Improve	11%	18%	11%	16%	7%	6%	8%	6%	15%
Stay Same	39%	31%	34%	40%	41%	30%	43%	52%	38%
Get Worse	46%	49%	55%	44%	51%	47%	36%	40%	43%
Don't Know	5%	3%	0%	0%	2%	18%	13%	2%	4%

**What about your own family's economic circumstances? Do you expect them to improve, stay the same, or get worse during the next year?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Improve	19%	19%	25%	41%	22%	14%	10%	13%	18%
Stay Same	59%	62%	50%	40%	62%	54%	67%	75%	54%
Get Worse	19%	18%	25%	19%	15%	26%	11%	13%	24%
Don't Know	3%	1%	0%	0%	2%	6%	12%	0%	4%

**Would you say that things in WISCONSIN are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Right Direction	34%	22%	18%	34%	38%	45%	34%	48%	34%
Wrong Track	56%	76%	74%	59%	51%	42%	53%	42%	49%
Don't Know	11%	2%	8%	7%	11%	13%	13%	10%	18%

**Would you say that things in this COUNTRY are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Right Direction	19%	9%	20%	18%	19%	24%	18%	28%	17%
Wrong Track	76%	82%	78%	75%	78%	77%	75%	66%	74%
Don't Know	6%	9%	2%	8%	4%	0%	7%	6%	9%

In the last ten years, do you think the standard of ethics in Wisconsin's state government has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Better	7%	9%	1%	2%	6%	24%	8%	11%	4%
Worse	50%	57%	62%	51%	53%	28%	56%	41%	47%
Stayed the same	38%	29%	36%	42%	37%	43%	33%	47%	39%
Don't Know/No Answer	5%	5%	2%	6%	4%	5%	3%	1%	10%

Now think about the members of the Wisconsin legislature. In the last ten years, do you think the standard of ethics of the members of the legislature has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Better	6%	1%	6%	3%	6%	21%	6%	5%	3%
Worse	44%	40%	40%	43%	43%	32%	58%	48%	44%
Stayed the same	43%	53%	49%	49%	45%	45%	30%	40%	40%
Don't Know/No Answer	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	2%	6%	8%	13%

Who do you think has the MOST POWER to determine what the state government spends – the voters across the state, or lobbying groups?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Voters	12%	15%	13%	19%	1%	18%	16%	9%	14%
Lobbying Groups	82%	81%	79%	75%	91%	82%	73%	89%	82%
Both	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Not Sure	4%	2%	8%	5%	6%	0%	8%	2%	3%
No Answer	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%

How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government to do what is right – just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Just About Always	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%	14%	0%	0%	0%
Most of the Time	24%	22%	18%	14%	18%	34%	26%	31%	30%
Some of the Time	70%	73%	77%	72%	78%	45%	67%	67%	66%
Not Sure	3%	4%	1%	9%	0%	8%	5%	2%	3%
No Answer	2%	0%	3%	5%	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%

**Overall, whose interest do you feel elected officials represent the most - your interests, special interests or their own interests?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Special interests	43%	38%	48%	43%	46%	45%	34%	54%	42%
Elected official's interests	42%	37%	40%	42%	45%	40%	41%	38%	44%
Voter's interests	10%	14%	7%	10%	6%	14%	18%	6%	8%
Refused/No Answer	5%	11%	5%	6%	4%	2%	8%	3%	5%

**Overall, do you think Wisconsin's state government spends too much, too little, or just about the right amount of tax dollars?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Too Much	62%	54%	79%	83%	64%	60%	57%	57%	51%
Too Little	11%	16%	3%	0%	3%	24%	16%	15%	13%
The Right Amount	17%	19%	13%	17%	25%	10%	16%	14%	16%
No Answer	11%	11%	5%	0%	8%	6%	11%	15%	20%

**In general, do you think Wisconsin taxpayers receive a GOOD VALUE or a POOR VALUE for the state taxes they have to pay?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Good Value	33%	18%	26%	38%	37%	43%	40%	38%	30%
Poor Value	55%	75%	71%	56%	48%	37%	39%	59%	54%
Neither	7%	7%	2%	4%	7%	17%	14%	0%	7%
No Answer	5%	1%	1%	2%	8%	3%	7%	4%	9%

**Would you favor or oppose a constitutional change to limit all state elected officials to no more than eight years in office?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Favor	72%	65%	76%	79%	80%	79%	64%	68%	70%
Oppose	22%	31%	20%	12%	17%	10%	27%	30%	22%
No Answer	6%	4%	4%	9%	3%	11%	9%	2%	9%

**Which one of the following six issues do you think needs the most attention from the Wisconsin state government at the present time?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Controlling Health Care and Prescription Drug Costs	30%	24%	26%	28%	38%	25%	25%	31%	35%
Reforming the Tax System	21%	22%	41%	27%	11%	24%	18%	24%	17%
Lowering the Wisconsin Gas Tax	16%	15%	6%	2%	24%	13%	20%	16%	18%
Improving Public Education	14%	26%	6%	18%	10%	6%	24%	15%	11%
Improving the ethics of Wisconsin politicians and bureaucrats	10%	6%	14%	8%	6%	21%	5%	9%	4%
Improving the State's Economy	8%	7%	7%	16%	11%	11%	6%	5%	4%

**Do you think the health care system in Wisconsin should be kept basically the same, be reformed or be radically changed?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Kept Basically the Same	20%	22%	21%	26%	18%	21%	13%	18%	24%
Reformed	39%	20%	34%	48%	40%	45%	50%	48%	34%
Radically Changed	34%	45%	42%	22%	37%	26%	32%	28%	31%
No Answer	7%	13%	4%	5%	5%	8%	5%	7%	11%

**Do you think the best way to reform health care in Wisconsin is by replacing the current private health insurance system with a new universal health insurance system that is run by the Wisconsin state government?**

~ or ~

**Do you think the best way to reform the current private health care system is to cut costs and provide more choices by increasing competition among private insurance companies and by requiring health care providers to publicly release their actual costs?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
State Government-Run System	23%	8%	26%	14%	24%	37%	27%	32%	21%
Reform Private System	70%	86%	67%	79%	67%	60%	67%	67%	71%
No Answer	6%	6%	7%	8%	9%	4%	6%	0%	8%



Next year there is likely to be a proposal to replace Wisconsin's current private health insurance system with a universal health insurance system controlled by the state government. Would you approve or disapprove of this proposal?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Approve	32%	28%	32%	34%	31%	20%	46%	39%	28%
Disapprove	53%	54%	54%	50%	58%	57%	38%	46%	57%
No Answer	16%	19%	13%	16%	12%	23%	16%	15%	15%

In Canada, the government pays for all the costs of health care out of taxes and negotiates directly with doctors and hospitals to set fees and the type of care they offer. If a similar plan were proposed for Wisconsin, would you favor or oppose it?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Favor	42%	40%	37%	40%	40%	36%	57%	46%	40%
Oppose	45%	43%	48%	53%	47%	59%	30%	40%	44%
No Answer	13%	17%	15%	8%	13%	5%	13%	14%	16%

If Wisconsin established a government-run health insurance system do you think out of state people would move to Wisconsin in order to enroll in this government-run health insurance system?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Yes	66%	62%	58%	73%	62%	56%	78%	71%	68%
No	24%	25%	30%	20%	23%	34%	17%	20%	22%
No Answer	11%	14%	12%	7%	16%	10%	5%	9%	10%

Should the state of Wisconsin allow illegal immigrants to apply for Wisconsin driver's licenses?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Yes	19%	17%	14%	22%	7%	32%	48%	11%	14%
No	76%	80%	81%	73%	87%	65%	49%	87%	77%
No Answer	5%	4%	5%	5%	7%	3%	3%	2%	9%

**Should the state of Wisconsin allow illegal immigrants to receive discounted in-state tuition at the University of Wisconsin?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
<b>Yes</b>	10%	11%	5%	7%	7%	25%	27%	7%	3%
<b>No</b>	86%	88%	90%	93%	88%	73%	64%	91%	93%
<b>No Answer</b>	4%	1%	6%	0%	5%	2%	10%	2%	5%

**Would you favor or oppose allowing illegal immigrant children to attend your local public schools?**

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
<b>Favor</b>	46%	44%	36%	42%	32%	72%	61%	50%	49%
<b>Oppose</b>	46%	47%	56%	50%	53%	28%	33%	46%	46%
<b>No Answer</b>	8%	9%	8%	9%	15%	0%	6%	5%	6%

## 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.