

# WI

WISCONSIN INTEREST

NOVEMBER 2013

# Rachel Campos-Duffy's Message

BY SUNNY SCHUBERT

Walker Book Excerpt:

Threats, Doubts  
and Resolve  
*plus*  
Charlie Sykes  
on the Walker  
Paradox

Central  
Wisconsin  
Goes Red

BY MIKE NICHOLS





Editor > CHARLES J. SYKES

## Heartland Conservatism

If there were any winners in the government shutdown, it may have been GOP governors, including Wisconsin's Scott Walker, who avoided being implicated in the U.S. Capitol's dysfunction. The governors have also been quick to contrast their records of actual accomplishment and reform with the ongoing gridlock at the federal level.

That is certainly one of the themes of Gov. Walker's new book, *Unintimidated: A Governor's Story and a Nation's Challenge*, which is excerpted in this edition of Wisconsin Interest. Walker tells the story of the fight for Act 10 but also pivots to the lessons of that fight for the rest of the country. He draws sharp contrasts with other leading national GOP figures, including Mitt Romney, who, Walker argues, utterly misunderstood the lesson of the Wisconsin reforms.

As Walker gears up for re-election and a higher profile on the national stage, the book also provides a glimpse at some of

the paradoxes of the man who still seems something of a mystery to friends and foes alike. In "Who is Scott Walker, really?" I describe him as a hard-edged conservative who talks about being a "champion to the vulnerable," as well as a master communicator who sometimes fails to make his case.

Also, Mike Nichols, the new WPRI president, examines an interesting shift in state politics: the transformation of central and northern Wisconsin from a reliable blue stronghold to the center of the state's rightward resurgence.

And our cover story this month features one of Wisconsin's most provocative young conservatives. Former reality TV star Rachel Campos-Duffy has emerged on both the state and national stages as a dynamic voice for Hispanic conservatives as well as a goad to conservatives who fear popular culture. And she's yet more evidence of that conservative surge in heartland Wisconsin.

## WPRI

The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, Inc., established in 1987, is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit institute working to engage and energize Wisconsinites and others in discussions and timely action on key public policy issues critical to the state's future, its growth and prosperity. The institute's research and public education activities are directed to identify and promote public policies in Wisconsin that are fair, accountable and cost effective.

Through original research and analysis and through public opinion polling, the institute's work will focus on such issue arenas as state and local government tax policy and spending and related program accountability, consequences and effectiveness. It will also focus on health care policy and service delivery; education; transportation and economic development; welfare and social services; and other issues currently or likely to significantly impact the quality of life and future of the state.

The institute is guided by a belief that competitive free markets, limited government, private initiative, and personal responsibility are essential to our democratic way of life.

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## Who is Scott Walker?



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**Correction:** In our interview with Tonette Walker last issue, we misidentified the first family's children. Matthew is the older son. Alex is the younger son.





## Fouled up beyond all recognition

*Fall came upon us with a burst of autumnal color and the joy that accompanies the end of a dismal baseball season and the return of football. But the season's festivities were somewhat dimmed by political gridlock, government shutdowns and bureaucratic FUBARs.*

### The Washington Monument syndrome

Normally, partial government shutdowns are dreary affairs, accompanied by the usual wails of distress from the entitled federal workforce and its associated interest groups. But this one left us with at least one iconic moment. This fall, the Washington Monument syndrome was officially replaced with the World War II Memorial syndrome.

Under orders from the Obama administration, the National Park Service erected barricades and told veterans and tourists that the open-air memorial had been closed. Anyone who followed the remarkable story of the Honor Flights from southeastern Wisconsin would not have been surprised by what happened next.

Undeterred by the attempted closure, a group of WWII veterans on an Honor Flight simply pushed their way through. The next day, when more veterans appeared, Park Service officers turned their backs and allowed them to once again storm their own monument. As one vet explained, "Normandy was closed when we got there, too."

Apparently immune to the awful optics, the Obama administration doubled down by wiring shut the barricades and closing off other open-air memorials, including the Vietnam Memorial.

For years, bureaucrats and politicians alike have relied on the so-called Washington Monument syndrome, defined by our friends at Wikipedia as "a political tactic used in the United States by government agencies when faced with budget cuts or a government shutdown. ... The name derives from the National Park Service's alleged habit of saying that any cuts would lead to an immediate closure of the wildly popular Washington Monument."

The point, of course, was to spark indignant demands for restored spending. But this fall, it didn't quite play out that way. Instead, it became a symbol of obtuse, vindictive political pettiness.



### A matter of trust

Such stunts are unlikely to improve the public trust in government, which seems to be at an all-time low.

A new Gallup poll, for example, finds that fewer Americans than ever trust their government to handle problems — either foreign or domestic.

Coming just a few months after President Obama famously urged the country to ignore the voices telling them to distrust tyrannical government, the numbers mark a stunning fall from grace for the president's government-is-your-friend-and-should-run-your-life narrative.

Back in May, Obama warned graduates at Ohio State:

"You'll hear voices that incessantly warn of government as nothing more than some separate, sinister entity that's the root of all our problems, even as they do their best to gum up the works; or that tyranny always lurks just around the corner. You should reject these voices. Because what they suggest is that our brave, creative, unique experiment in self-rule is just a sham with which we can't be trusted."

That narrative was, of course, central to the progressive project of growing the welfare and regulatory state and seemed to be in the ascendancy after the 2012 election. But a steady dose of scandals, political gridlock, government dysfunction, ideological over-reach and economic stagnation eventually takes its toll. And now comes Obamacare.

### The train wreck comes to town

Apologies are in order. Critics of Obamacare had long asked whether we wanted to turn over our health care to the folks who run the DMV. But this turns out to be unfair to the DMV.

The Oct. 1 rollout turned out to be a SNAFU inside a FUBAR, wrapped in a meltdown. Even with more than two years to plan, hundreds of millions of dollars invested, and the highest possible political stakes, the system crashed on launch.

"We have not been able to enroll anyone today," a

spokeswoman for Progressive Community Health Centers in Milwaukee admitted. As in nada, bupkis. *The New York Times* reported that other navigators here weren't able to sign up a single person. "That I know of, none of our people got through on the system," said Legal Action of Wisconsin's Matthew Hayes. At the end of the first week of Obamacare, CNBC reported that 99 percent of applicants had "hit a wall."

## A steady dose of scandals, gridlock, dysfunction, stagnation and Obamacare takes its toll.

And this is just the beginning. Eventually, the feds will get around to fixing their software. Fixing the flawed policy will take a lot longer.

### Wisconsin rising

Well, yes, we could do with good news too. Fortunately, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia had some for Wisconsin. In early October, the Philadelphia Fed issued new numbers that put Wisconsin first in economic outlook for the next six months. Missed that story? You're not alone.

Some of the same media outlets that ran banner headlines about the same report, from the same source, earlier this year have since decided that the Philly Fed report is no longer newsworthy or trustworthy. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, which ran a breathless front-page story when the index ranked Wisconsin 49th in the country, simply spiked the stories about the index when the indicators started to rise.

Not surprisingly, Gov. Scott Walker is touting the new numbers: "This is just another sign that Wisconsin's economic future looks bright," he said. "We are creating jobs at levels that haven't been seen in over a decade and are setting records this year in job growth."

### Twilight of the unions

Unions didn't fare much better than the bureaucrats this fall.

Buried in coverage of the news that Kenosha's teachers union has been decertified was this gem of a quote from a WEAC official: "It seems like the majority of our affiliates in the state aren't seeking re-certification," said Christina Brey.

Given a choice whether to join the unions, teachers across

the state decided that, all things considered, they'd rather not. With apologies to the Capitol protesters, this is what democracy looks like.

### An Act 10 update

Speaking of what Act 10 hath wrought, local governments and school district around the state continue to reap the benefits of the law that freed them from collective bargaining constraints. Marshfield is one example: The school district there has saved \$1.4 million simply by changing health insurance providers and increasing deductibles. "These tools we have been given have been quite effective for us being able to curtail and control the costs," Pat Saucerman, business director for the Marshfield School District, told the *Marshfield News-Herald*.

"I'm stunned by this," Saucerman said. "Twice now we have had plan design changes that have reduced the cost for us. ... Marshfield has become the poster child for the right way to do this as it relates to health insurance costs."

### They must really like us

Wisconsin was also on the itinerary of the great, the famous and the officious. With Desperate Housewife Eva Longoria in tow, first lady Michelle Obama came to Watertown to plug the benefits of drinking... water. (Get it? Watertown? Water?)

Meanwhile, Gina McCarthy, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, visited Madison and its new downtown "green" library. Her visit prompted the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce to suggest a modification to her itinerary, given her agency's ongoing war on coal, which provides 60 percent of the electricity used here. "Ms. McCarthy should visit a factory," WMC said, "to explain to shop floor workers why we need an incredibly expensive and job-threatening rule that EPA's own analysis says will have a negligible impact on carbon levels."

### Congrats

And finally, our congratulations to former Lt. Gov. Margaret Farrow for winning the inaugural Margaret Thatcher Award at October's Right Women Awards Dinner. An iron lady, indeed, and an inspiration for the rest of us as we brace for another long winter, followed by yet another election year. ■

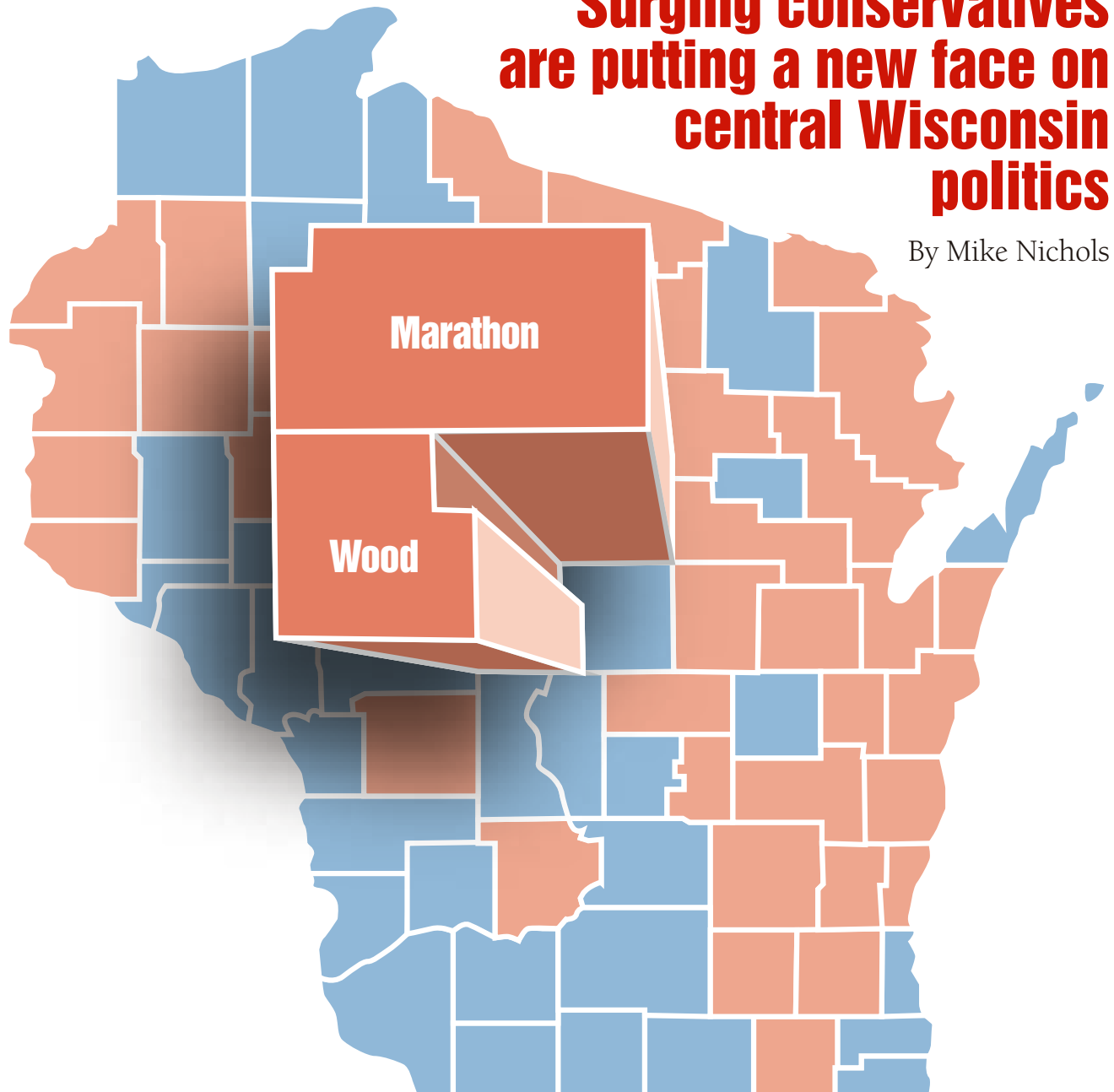
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*Editor Charles J. Sykes' latest book is A Nation of Moochers: America's Addiction to Getting Something for Nothing (St. Martin's Griffin).*

# True portrait

**Surging conservatives  
are putting a new face on  
central Wisconsin  
politics**

By Mike Nichols



The official caricaturist at the Central Wisconsin State Fair in Marshfield was located nowhere near the local Democratic Party's booth. But no matter.

If you were a conservative stopping for a little literature and conversation after the cricket-spitting contest, you could quickly get lampooned just as effectively — and for free.

Among the literature available at the booth over the Labor Day weekend: a piece advising Republicans who “hate taxes” to refrain from using Social Security, public restrooms, sidewalks, federally regulated airplanes, the Internet, and water from public drinking fountains. Liberals, went the logic, are free to drink deep.

A Democratic volunteer, after observing that the Marshfield area is largely conservative, remarked that “this is really a white, rural area, and a lot of people have not had a lot of education after high school.” She then launched into a diatribe about a lack of tolerance for minorities and allegations that some people still use the “N-word.”

All of which begs the question: Why have so many Wisconsinites in the heartland of the state suddenly become close-minded, government-hating, racist simpletons?

Across the way, over at the Wood County Republican Party booth, Marilyn Knoll and Frank Deppe, congenial volunteers from Wisconsin Rapids and the Town of Rudolph, respectively, had the answer:

Local conservatives are not what liberals say they are. In fact, independent-minded central Wisconsin conservatives are not what many folks on the right might assume, either.

“I bet you did not think you’d come to a booth and find us,” said the 65-year-old Deppe, sitting near

Knoll and a second woman who preferred to remain unnamed.

“A retired Teamster and,” Deppe said, gesturing to himself and his anonymous friend, “a retired teacher.”

Conservatism, it seems, is showing up with new vigor in all sorts of surprising places — and people.

**There has been a tectonic move to the right in central Wisconsin.**

“There’s no denying things have shifted,” says Mandy Wright, the only remaining Democrat among eight state representatives and senators in Marathon County.

**The real political juice in the heart of the state is redder than ever, and it doesn’t have anything to do with redistricting.**

Wright — an articulate political newcomer who eked out a victory with less than 50 percent of the vote in a three-way general election last November and who sometimes sounds fairly conservative herself — represents what she calls a “historic” Assembly seat

once held by both former Congressman Dave Obey and former Gov. Tony Earl.

They’re not the only Democratic stalwarts who are merely memories. Onetime liberal mainstays like Russ Decker and Roger Breske are fading into the past as well. Decker, a former Senate majority leader from Schofield who represented the 29th Senate District for almost 20 years, was ousted in 2010 by Republican Pam Galloway. She was a doctor who later resigned and was succeeded by Republican Jerry Petrowski.

The adjacent 12th District Senate seat, which extends from Marathon County all way up to the state’s border in the northeast, was long the province of Breske but is now being filled by Republican Tom Tiffany.

It is true that Wood County — where Marshfield and the fair are located — is the home of onetime Obey aide state Rep. Amy Sue Vruwink, at least

for now. (She beat Republican newcomer Nancy VanderMeer in the 2012 race by a mere 144 votes out of almost 27,000 cast.) But if you lift your gaze a little on the map to the rest of central and northern Wisconsin, it is almost as solidly red as Wisconsin's cranberry bogs.

**The real political juice in the heart of the state** is redder than ever, and it doesn't have anything to do with redistricting. Even before districts were redrawn in 2012, counties like Marathon and Wood that were once reliable liberal bellwethers had moved decidedly right. The presidential vote proved the metamorphosis was real.

Both went for Bill Clinton over Bob Dole in 1996 before opting twice for George Bush. They then fervently embraced Barack Obama just five years ago. Marathon went for Obama by no less than 9 percentage points over John McCain in 2008, while Wood County favored the Democratic candidate and eventual winner by no less than 14.

Then came 2012.

While Obama prevailed by 4 percentage points nationally and 7 percentage points in Wisconsin, both Wood and Marathon went for Romney — the latter county by a convincing 6 percentage points. Sean Duffy's 7th Congressional District, which stretches across a vast swath of central and northern Wisconsin, went narrowly for Romney as well.

One school of thought says central and northern Wisconsinites are just revealing their true nature, their respect for a buck and a job, their disdain for overspending and government dependence, their belief in local decision-making over a big, centralized, monolithic federal government.

"I think these small rural communities are, at heart, conservative," says Tiffany. "Now, I don't think they have always voted conservative."

Then why now?

One key reason: Dave Obey. The liberal titan, who served 21 terms in Congress, became much less a creature of Wausau than Washington, where he now works for former House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt's government affairs shop. But his influence on voters up and down the ticket in central Wisconsin was almost as effective and unbridled as his acerbic tongue.

"You cannot overestimate the change from Dave Obey to Sean Duffy," says Tiffany, an increasingly high-

profile Republican from tiny Hazelhurst who took the lead on pro-mining legislation. Obey was constantly going around saying, "The evil Republicans are going to take away your Social Security and Medicare," says Tiffany. The

former chair of the House Appropriations Committee made a living at it, and people believed him, he explains. They also believed Obey was on the side of the common man.

"I think there is a real populist streak here," says Tiffany. "If you can harness that, it really helps a political candidate. People like Dave Obey and Russ Decker got into office partly by emphasizing that populist streak."

Obey secured support with federal money. He brought gobs of it back to his district, and bragged about it. And he dished lots out elsewhere as well. He didn't just play a key role in passing the \$787 billion stimulus package, he said it should have been bigger. He didn't just preside over the vote that pushed Obamacare over the top in the House, he said he wished it included a more aggressive "public option."

Obey stepped aside in 2010 without having to face voters after all the largesse. But to the fundamentally frugal back in his home state, what once seemed like populism was likely looking more and more like profligacy.

**'There's no denying things have shifted,' says state Rep. Mandy Wright, the last remaining Democrat representing Marathon County.**



**Marathon County is still largely agricultural, and** farmers and other small business owners tend to be fiscally conservative.

“They don’t like a lot of spending. They want to keep money in their pockets. They’re concerned about taxes,” says John Spiros, a first-term state representative who represents the area around the fair in Wood County and much of Marathon County to the north.

As proof of that fundamental frugality, Tiffany points to support for Scott Walker among central Wisconsinites after he pushed through the limits on collective bargaining.

“Look at the recall map,” said Tiffany. “They got it. They said, ‘You have to live within your means.’”

Portage County, south of Marathon and east of Wood, was one of the few places outside the big cities that went for Barrett in the recall race. But the rest of central and almost all of northern Wisconsin — dozens and dozens of counties — went for Walker, and in many places by enormous margins. Barrett ran up big numbers in Milwaukee and Madison, but almost nowhere else.

Times are tight, and most central Wisconsinites did not think more spending and more government and more dependence were the answer. Deppe, sitting behind the Republican table at the fair, articulates just why.

He was a Teamster, a member of Local 662 who drove a truck for a living for 27 years. He voted for Duffy and he voted for Walker, and he says he never regretted it.

“The longer [Walker] is in there, and his policies are coming into effect, the better people realize it,” he said.

He’s not an acolyte for any politician. In fact, he’s downright disdainful of politicians of all stripes in Washington. Despite where he was sitting, he said he’s not even really a Republican.

“We’re conservatives,” he said. “Independent conservatives. If there were a Conservative Party, that’s where we’d be sitting.”

“We have no other voice. This is the only voice we have,” added Knoll.

Her husband, who worked with Deppe, passed away not long ago. She said she was told she could receive a larger Social Security death benefit if she stopped working herself. Maybe even get food stamps.

She shook her head.

“I’m not willing to stay home and be dependent on the government,” she said.

“I don’t want to do that. I want to be independent. I like people. I like socializing.

I like money to buy things. ... If I had to sit at home and do nothing and just collect Social Security, I’d be depressed.”

“So many people are getting something for nothing,” said Deppe. “Why would you go out and look for a job when you get unemployment [compensation] for 99 weeks,” a length of time some Wisconsinites were eligible at one point.

Over at the local Tea Party booth at the fair, there was a similar sentiment on display. On a placard right out front was a chart labeled “Food Stamp Presidency” showing that over 47 million Americans now use food stamps — an accurate number that is up from 26 million at the end of the Bush administration.

“If I had to make a guess” at why the area has become more conservative, said George Kantz, 68, a retired Marshfield resident who was a manager at Weyerhaeuser and also served in the Coast Guard Reserve, “it’s a reaction to overreach by the federal

**‘These small rural communities are, at heart, conservative,’ says state Rep. Tom Tiffany. ‘Now, I don’t think they have always voted conservative.’**

government.”

Back at the Wood County Republican Party booth, the teacher who sat silently between Knoll and Deppe finally spoke up. Her conservatism stems, in part, from the fact that she is pro-life, a position that finds little support on the left. But asked about Act 10, Walker’s legislation that severely curtailed collective bargaining and caused a firestorm among the old guard in the teachers’ unions, she comes down on the conservative side as well.

“I guess I know there is a limited amount of money,” she said.

**Social issues are important, to be sure. So are Second Amendment rights,** which resonate deeply here. When voters considered a constitutional amendment to keep and bear arms in 1998, it passed overwhelmingly statewide with 74 percent of the vote. In Marathon County, it topped 82 percent.

But “at this point,” says Tiffany, “it’s all about economic opportunity and job creation. .... That’s where the battle lines are drawn.” And, he adds, “less

government, especially at the federal level, is the best way to accomplish that.”

“I think people are ripe for the explanation that we have tried the big government route. We have big government in every facet of our lives, and how is that

**‘Democrats have done a wonderful job of painting us as the evil boogiemán,’ says local GOP leader Jim Miller. ‘We have to attract these younger voters, or we will be an extinct party.’**

working out for us?”

Troubled times, increasing debt and reliance on government, a basic acknowledgement that human beings are happier and more prosperous through work — all play into the conservative philosophy. But Tiffany also believes conservatives in the area just have better, more visible messengers than they used to.

On the flip-side, liberals face a different reality. When Obey was around, it was easy to ride his machine and his coattails. Local liberals didn’t develop a grassroots organization of their own. Some conservatives think they actually forgot how to campaign. The Obey coattails have now disappeared and left the left grasping for something that is no longer there.

Spiros, a one-time Texas cop who moved to Wisconsin in 2002, puts it succinctly.

“I heard the Obey name,” he said, “but I never saw Dave Obey. I see Sean Duffy all the time.”

Political momentum, of course, can quickly change direction. And pendulum swings are just as common in central Wisconsin as anywhere else. Democrat Obey was preceded in Congress by Republican giant Mel Laird, who served 16 years before becoming President Richard Nixon’s secretary of defense in 1969. Old-timers remember that Clifford “Tiny” Krueger, the former circus fat boy from Marathon

### Wood County in brief

**County seat:** Wisconsin Rapids

**Population:** 74,424

**White:** 95.6%

**BA or higher degree:** 18.3%

**Median household income (2007-’11):** \$47,182

**Persons below poverty level (2007-’11):** 10%

**Median home value (2007-’11):** \$117,900

**Homeownership rate:** 74.6%

**Higher ed facilities:** UW-Marshfield/Wood County, Mid-State Technical College

**Major employers:** Marshfield Clinic, Ministry St. Joseph’s Hospital, Roehl Transport, NewPage Wisconsin Systems

SOURCES: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU,  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

County, served 34 years in the Legislature before stepping down in 1983. He was one of the last Progressive Republicans, a now-extinct branch, and sang the praises of Fightin' Bob LaFollette.

Gone, too, are guys like Breske, a Democrat who was willing to buck his party on the statewide smoking ban and concealed weapons legislation. He saw himself as a spokesman for small business and, as a *Wausau Daily Herald* story put it when he died in 2012, “seldom let politics stand in his way.”

Indeed, as politicians on both sides become less independent and more likely to march in lockstep with their parties, the folks in the middle are, perhaps, less likely to feel much kinship with either. But, given a fundamental conservatism, they're more likely to vote Republican.

Still, it would behoove Republicans not to take too much comfort in their success of late. Populism, common sense and independence have a history of trumping strict ideology and party in central Wisconsin.

Some observers raise the possibility that the current

shift rightward, in fact, has been purely a product of the moment rather than a reflection of a deeper philosophic shift. Wright, the first-term Democrat who now holds Obey's old Assembly seat, suggests that conservatives are riding high simply because the new campaign finance laws have given them a tactical advantage in elections. For that matter, even on the right there is blunt acknowledgement that conservatives have to reach out to new constituencies and younger voters to keep winning.

“I think the Democrats have done a wonderful job of painting us as the evil boogiemán,” says Jim Miller, the Republic Party chairman of the 7th Congressional District. “We have to attract these younger voters, or we will be an extinct party.”

What conservatives need to do, he says, is to get out into places they've traditionally ceded to liberals, including college campuses, and tell their story.

This message — rebutting negative stereotypes, finding good storytellers willing to bring the conservative gospel to seemingly unreceptive spots — is a message for conservatism in general. In central and northern Wisconsin, the movement has seemingly found the right people at the right time to step forward.

“People up north have always been pretty independent-minded,” says Miller. “We feel we've had a disconnect with southern Wisconsin and have had to go it on our own.”

The ongoing challenge is to get folks walking in the middle of the exposition center to wander over and listen. And the longest lines, in truth, were not at any of the booths manned by the Republicans or Democrats or Tea Party members. They were at the “mini masseuse booth” where folks could sit down and have a kink worked out of their neck.

Those booths always have a healthy business, just like the quick-sketching caricaturists. ■

## Marathon County in brief

**County Seat:** Wausau

**Population:** 134,735

**White:** 89.8%

**BA or higher degree:** 21.2%

**Median household income (2007-'11):** \$54,316

**Persons below poverty line (2007-'11):** 9.4%

**Median home value (2007-'11):** \$141,700

**Homeownership rate:** 74.5%

**Higher ed facilities:** UW-Marathon County, Northcentral Technical College

**Major employers:** Aspirus Wausau Hospital, Greenheck Fan Corp., Wausau School District, Kolbe & Kolbe Millwork

SOURCES: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU,  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Mike Nichols is president of the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute. He wrote on the leadership problem in the Milwaukee Public Schools in the August issue.

# Collectivized care



*Markets have worked marvelously for providing necessities like food and shelter. Why not for health care?*

**BY RICHARD ESENBERG**

Obamacare has become — sort of — operational. It has been a long wait.

The Affordable Care Act was given the softest open in history. It was a piece of public policy so wonderful in its beneficence and sage in its design that it could not be implemented until after the president was safely re-elected. Indeed, certain key provisions — such as the employer mandate and verification that persons receiving subsidies actually are entitled to them — are still not in place. In defiance of clear statutory language, they have been suspended until after the president's final mid-term elections.

Exemptions have been handed out like government cell phones. Numerous “glitches” — such as the fact that the law does not provide for the payment of premium subsidies in states like Wisconsin that have not set up an

exchange — have been waved away. The president apparently will not be chained to the “false choice” of following the law or getting what he wants.

My guess is that the reluctance to fully implement Obamacare has not been rooted in a desire to avoid the political benefits that its wonders would confer on the Democrats. It seems more likely that the engineers wanted off the train before it wrecked.

But will it wreck? The short answer is that no one knows.

**There is a sense in which Obamacare is neither fish nor fowl.** It seeks to create incentives and penalties to induce, rather than coerce, businesses and individuals to do things that they absolutely must do if the scheme is to have a prayer of working.

But in the grand tradition of democratic decision-making, its carrots are small and its sticks, while large enough to hurt, may not be big enough to secure compliance. It is possible that a critical mass of employers and individuals will not offer or purchase coverage, and the entire contraption will fall apart.

Even if we avert a catastrophe, Obamacare will give us more of what is already problematic in how we purchase



health care in the United States. It will continue to move us away from health insurance and in the direction of collectivizing routine costs of care. “Insurance,” as that term is used in every other context, is a hedge against sporadic and unpredictable costs that are too large to absorb. Car insurance, for example, doesn’t cover routine maintenance. We insure our homes from catastrophic damage, but we don’t buy grocery coverage.

But when it comes to health care, “insurance” has come to mean a contract through which we pay money to have someone else pay our bills. Obamacare doubles down on that, mandating coverage for routine costs that one would not think are necessary for most people to “insure” against. Recall how the republic was torn asunder over the GOP’s suggestion that those employed by dissenting religious organizations might have to pay ten bucks out of pocket each month for birth control.

The common justification for collectivizing even routine and manageable health care costs is to say that “no one” should have to choose between health care and any other use for their resources. Markets in health care “can’t work,” we are told, because the demand is, as economists say, “inelastic.” If you are sick or injured, you must go to the doctor or hospital. Things that are “essential,” the argument continues, should not be rationed by price.

I am skeptical. We also must eat and be clothed and sheltered, yet markets have worked quite well in dramatically reducing the cost of — and improving — these necessities. We have, to be sure, stepped in to assist those who could not afford these things for themselves, but we haven’t collectivized the way in which most of us are fed, clothed and housed.

As a result, markets, governed by the choices of consumers and producers, have reduced costs and generated innovation. Not everyone chooses wisely, and markets occasionally move in directions that must later be corrected, but, in the fairly near term, we generally reach the most efficient allocation of resources possible.

**That is not the way of Obamacare. Its linchpin is** the narrowing of consumer choice. One must purchase at least the prescribed amount of health care, and one may only choose from among a banded set of approved coverages.

It restricts the choices of producers as well. In the absence of functioning markets, care must be rationed and costs controlled. Obamacare must rely on top down approaches to control costs, trusting that experts, rather than patients and providers, can “bend the cost curve.”

Again, I’m skeptical. There isn’t one of the various panacea associated with Obamacare — things like payment per patient and not by service — that has not been tried by the government or private insurers

in the past. Why we would believe something that has not worked in the past would work in the future is beyond me.

None of this means the system must collapse. It is quite possible that we will muddle along in an Obamacare world, never knowing what it may have cost us. It may be a world passably comfortable, akin to the cozy mediocrity of England’s National Health Service. But it is unlikely to be as good as possible, and, in the end, that may be the real pity of the Affordable Care Act. ■

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*Even if we avert a catastrophe, Obamacare will give us more of what is already problematic with health care in the United States.*



# Who is Scott Walker, really?

## His new book highlights the paradoxes of the man and his politics

BY CHARLES J. SYKES

Three years into his tumultuous first term, as he prepares to run for re-election and perhaps position himself for a presidential run in 2016, Scott Walker remains a puzzle to even some of his closest observers. He is, after all, a hard-edged conservative who talks about being a “champion to the vulnerable”; a fiscal conservative who disdains the politics of austerity; as well as a master communicator who sometimes fails to make his case.

His new book is unlikely to satisfy his critics or dispel all of the mystery behind the man we should know so much better. But it is a start.

*Unintimidated: A Governor's Story and a Nation's Challenge* (Sentinel Books), is an attempt not merely to tell the story of his battle over Act 10, but to define “Walkerism” and to sharply differentiate its style and philosophy from those of other leading Republicans, especially failed presidential candidate Mitt Romney.

Along the way, the book highlights the paradoxes

of the man at the center of the storm. Let's take a look at those paradoxes one by one and how they might play on the national stage.

### **Walker is a fiscal conservative but disdains the politics of austerity.**

After nine years as Milwaukee county executive and three years as governor, Walker's image (at least among progressives) is that of a relentless budget cutter. In a scathing attack in 2011, historian John Gurda accused him of “dismantling government one line item at a time, regardless of the consequences.”

But in his book, Walker is sharply critical of what he calls the “sour politics of austerity.”

“Too often, conservatives present themselves as the bearers of sour medicine, when we should be offering a positive, optimistic agenda instead.”

His budget could have laid off tens of thousands of middle class workers, slashed Medicaid, and cut

Instead, Walker champions what he calls a “hopeful, optimistic alternative to austerity.”

The key, he writes, is rejecting the “false choice” of spending cuts versus tax hikes and opting instead for changing the fundamental rules of the game. “We found a way to make government not just smaller, but also more responsive, more efficient and more effective. And because we did, we were able to cut government spending while still *improving* education and public services.”

Early in the fight over Act 10, a liberal critic referred to Walker's "icy ideology." But his argument for championing the less fortunate is central to Walkerism (and to his scathing critique of the failure of Mitt Romney to connect with voters.)

“Republicans need to reclaim their position as the party of upward mobility and opportunity for all,” he argues. Walker places heavy emphasis on the need to reform entitlement programs not by emphasizing green eyeshade critiques but by stressing the importance of moving people from dependence to independence.

When the left accuses him of “hating” the poor, Walker responds: “I love the people of my state so much that I don’t want them to be permanently dependent on the government. I don’t want to make it harder for them to get government assistance; I want to make it easier for them to get a *job*.”

“We need to champion immigrants who come here seeking a better life. We need to champion those born here in poverty who want nothing more than to escape it.... That requires more than saying the right things. It requires showing up in inner city schools and talking about expanding school choice, reading initiatives and our plans to reform education, so that everyone among us will have the mental tools to build a better life.”

In the book, Walker is scathing in his critique of Romney's 47 percent comment, saying that he "cringed" when he heard Romney say, "I'm not

concerned about the very poor.” And he labels Romney’s use of the phrase “self-deportation” as “disastrous.”

“You can’t win the presidency when nearly two-thirds of the country thinks you don’t care about their struggles,” he writes.

**Walker is a policy wonk but emphasizes the need to tell stories about “fairness.”**

He comes from the Paul Ryan/Ron Johnson “I-have-a-chart-for-that” School of Fiscal Conservatism. So, it’s striking to see Walker quote the American Enterprise Institute’s Arthur Brooks, who argues that human beings by their nature respond to moral, rather than empirical, arguments.

“Conservatives spend far too much time trying to move minds, without moving hearts as well. We gather tons of empirical data to back up our arguments, only to see the liberals respond with heartbreaking stories about how our policies will

Walker is sharply critical of what he calls the 'sour politics of austerity.'



supposedly hurt children, the elderly and the destitute. The heartbreaking stories win.

“If we counter the left’s arguments simply with logic, reason and data alone, we will lose the debate over the future of our country. But if we counter them with logic, reason, data *and* an appeal to the American people’s innate sense of fairness, we can prevail.”

**He is a radical reformer but talks about appealing to the center.**

To his critics, of course, Walker is a figure of extraordinary divisiveness. But polls suggest that something like 11 percent of the state's electorate supports both Walker and his ideological nemesis, Barack Obama.

Walker repeatedly emphasizes the importance of “boldness” and tackling major issues with



sweeping reforms. “I governed as a conservative reformer and didn’t flinch,” he writes. But Walker argues that the key to understanding the Walker-Obama voter phenomenon is recognizing the bloc of “independent, reform-minded voters” who are attracted to “a reform agenda that is hopeful and optimistic.”

Walker flatly rejects the idea that Republicans need to “moderate” their views to appeal to an increasingly left-leaning electorate. “Our principles are not the problem,” he argues. “If our principles

**‘We found a way  
to make government  
not just smaller, but also  
more responsive and  
more efficient.’**

were the problem, then why are so many Republican governors winning elections by campaigning on those very principles.” He points to the fact that in the era of Obama, the GOP has gone from controlling both the legislatures and governorships in eight states to controlling them in 23 states in 2013. No GOP governor, he notes, has lost a general election since 2007.

“We did not win all those races by running from our principles. We won by *applying* our principles in ways that are *relevant* to the lives of our citizens.”

**Walker is an intransigent politician but is willing to compromise.**

During the battle of Act 10, the public perception of Walker as a my-way-or-the-highway politician, unwilling to compromise with his opponents, proved a heavy drag on his image. But, in the book, he points out that he was not only willing to compromise with Democrats, he also significantly modified his own proposal in the face of GOP opposition.

“My original plan for Act 10 was to eliminate collective bargaining altogether for all government

“Similarly, when Republican senators wanted to reform collective bargaining rather than eliminate it, we compromised again — finding a way to accommodate their concerns while preserving the goals of our legislation.” His attempts to strike a deal with the absent Democratic senators ultimately were rejected.

He may be the most media-ready governor west of Chris Christie, but in the excerpt from “Unintimidated” that

“If my own wife didn’t see why we needed to change collective bargaining, how could I expect the voters of Wisconsin to see it? I was obviously doing a lousy job of explaining our reforms.” As a result, Walker has become much more disciplined in explaining his thinking.

Walker recounts at length and in graphic detail

But even in the newly toxified atmosphere. “It was important to me that they saw that I never responded in kind to the often vicious attacks directed against me. I was firm and did not budge — but no matter how personal the invective became, I

But the book shows a far more reflective figure who is willing to admit his worst mistakes. Writing about the embarrassing prank phone call from an activist claiming to be billionaire David Koch, Walker admits, “I was not as mad at him as I was at myself. Listening to my voice on the recording of the call, my heart sank. I came across as pompous and full of myself.”

He describes his press conference in the

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In the era of Obama,  
the GOP has gone from  
controlling both the  
legislatures and governorships  
in eight states to controlling  
them in 23 states in 2013.

aftermath: “I felt like an idiot. Sure, I was upset that my staff had let the call get through to my office, making me look so silly. But ultimately, I was responsible for what I said and how I came across.”

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Those paradoxes will be central to the way that Walker is trying to define himself on the national stage. And this brings us to a final paradox: **A strong supporter of Mitt Romney’s 2012 presidential bid, Walker is now biting in his criticism of his campaign and its message.**

Walker says flatly that Mitt Romney “did not get the message of Wisconsin.”

He writes: “Two days after I won my recall election, Mitt Romney seized upon our victory to make his case against Barack Obama. The president ‘says we need more firemen, more policemen, more teachers,’ Romney declared. ‘Did he not get the message of Wisconsin?’



“Unfortunately, it was Gov. Romney who did not get the message of Wisconsin.... Our reforms had *protected* the jobs of firemen, policemen and teachers. We had avoided the mass layoffs of public

workers that local communities were facing in other states across America. We had strengthened local government and improved public services.”

But Walker saves his sharpest criticism for what

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**‘Gov. Romney did not get the message of Wisconsin,’ Walker writes. ‘Our reforms had *protected* the jobs of firemen, policemen and teachers.’**

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he says was Romney’s failure to provide a positive alternative to President Obama. Instead, he “let the Obama campaign cast him in the role of an out-of-touch rich guy.”

Walker recounts how his advice to Romney’s team “fell mostly on deaf ears,” noting that when he made public suggestions, “we learned there were a lot of screamers in Boston.”

Perhaps his most biting critique is his comparison of Romney’s failed campaign to the failed recall candidacy of Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett.

Like Romney, Barrett failed to offer a positive alternative vision. “His entire message was ‘Dump Scott Walker’ — just as Mitt Romney’s entire message in the fall campaign was ‘Dump Barack Obama.’

“In other words, President Obama won by using the same successful message we employed in the recall election, while Mitt Romney lost by emulating the failed message of Mayor Barrett.”

In conservative circles, that’s going to leave a mark.

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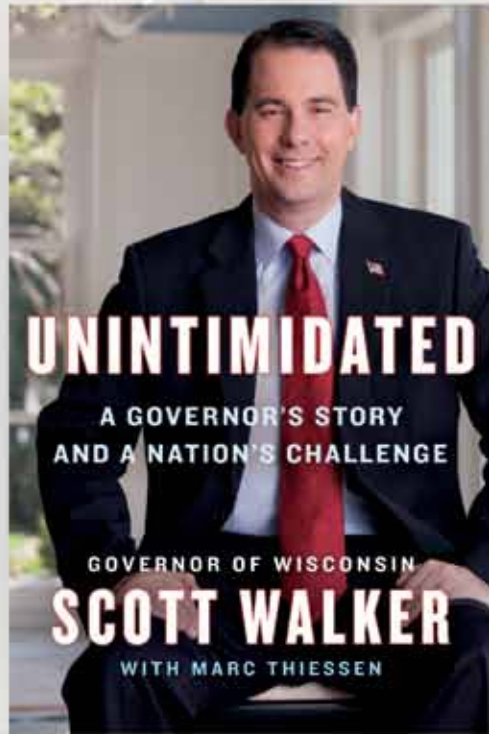
# Threats, doubts and resolve

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**Editor's note:** When Scott Walker was sworn in as Wisconsin's 45th governor on Jan. 3, 2011, he faced an unprecedented \$3.6 billion deficit. Moving quickly to deal with the crisis, on Feb. 11 he announced his bold plan to balance the budget, prompting Democrats and their union supporters to explode in fury. We're fortunate to present the governor's account of

those tempestuous days in this edited excerpt from his new book, *Unintimidated: A Governor's Story and a Nation's Challenge*, which he wrote with Marc Thiessen. (The selection and photos are offered through an agreement with Sentinel, an imprint of Penguin Random House. Copyright © Scott Walker and Marc Thiessen, 2013.)





## In an excerpt from his new book, Gov. Walker details his struggle to break the union stranglehold on Wisconsin government

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On Feb. 15, I went to La Crosse for a visit to a manufacturing company. Outside the facility, we were greeted by hundreds of angry protesters, but inside we got an enthusiastic reception from the blue-collar workers. As I recall, they were paying about 25 percent of their health insurance premiums and had to match their employer contributions to their

pensions, so they didn't have a whole lot of sympathy for the folks outside complaining about having to pay 5.6 percent for their pensions and 12.6 percent for their health care. It was a great event.

As we prepared to leave, the state troopers saw that the protesters had physically blocked the entrance we had used to come



onto the property. So they turned the squad car around and headed toward the other exit. We watched in disbelief as the throng of people rushed toward the second exit to block our path. As we tried to pull out, they surrounded the car and began beating on the windows and rocking the vehicle. Just as we extricated ourselves from their grip, a truck pulled up and blocked our path, playing a game of chicken with the troopers. They turned the lights and sirens on and warned him to get out of way. Eventually he backed up, and we sped off.

It was a lesson in how much our circumstance had changed in a matter of a few days. We were dealing with people who were so blinded by their anger that they were not in the least bit afraid to storm and shake a police car. We had never seen anything like it in Wisconsin before.

And that was only the beginning. The

protests following us around the state grew bigger and louder — and the protesters got more aggressive with each passing day.

After the La Crosse incident, State Patrol Capt. Dave Erwin took me aside and explained that we needed to increase security — not just for me but also for Tonette and the kids. Dave briefed me about the stream of intelligence he was receiving from the state Division of Criminal Investigation. Our whole family was being watched, followed and tracked, he said.

Dave was not prone to exaggeration. He is a former marine who had headed former Gov. Jim Doyle's security detail. He is the consummate professional.

"Governor, I've been at this awhile, and when the hairs stand up on the back of my neck, you have to be concerned," Dave said. "They know where you go to church; they've been to your church. They're following your

children and tracking your children. They know where your children go to school, what time they have class, what time they get out of class. They know when they had football practice. They know where your wife works, they know that she was at the grocery store at this time, they know that she went to visit her father at his residence.”

We talked about some of the additional measures he would take to keep the family safe. Dave increased the size of our detail and assigned troopers to keep an eye on the kids at school. (Both of my sons were attending a public high school, and the Wauwatosa police officers really looked out for Matt and Alex too.) He also explained that we could no longer do simple tasks like going to the curb to pick up the mail, which would now have to be screened.

**We soon began to get a steady stream of** death threats. Most of these Dave and his team intercepted and kept from Tonette and me. They were often graphic (one threatened to “gut her like a deer”), but for the most part they amounted to little more than angry venting.

But one afternoon, as I prepared to go out to the conference room for my daily press briefing, Dave came into my office and shut the door. “Sir, I don’t show you most of these, but I thought you ought to see this one.” He handed me a letter addressed to Tonette that had been picked up by a police officer at the executive residence in Maple Bluff. It read:

*HI TONETTE,*

*Has Wisconsin ever had a governor assassinated? Scotts heading that way. Or maybe one of your sons getting killed would hurt him more. I want him to feel the pain. I already follow them when they went to school in Wauwatosa, so it won’t be too hard to find them in Mad. Town. Big change from that house by [BLANK] Ave. to what you got now. Just let him know that it’s not right to [EXPLETIVE] over all those people. Or maybe I could find one of the Tarantinos [Tonette’s parents] back here. Lots of choices for me.*

The letter had a Green Bay postmark, but there were no fingerprints or other indications of who had sent it. Dave explained that it raised red flags because, unlike most of the hate mail and death threats we received, it was very specific. The sender talked about following our kids to school, the street where we lived, and threatened not just me but my children and my in-laws. I decided not to share the note with Tonette and the kids right away.

Security was already tight around the family. Eventually, long after everything was over, I told her, Matt, and Alex about it. According to my staff, the only time they ever saw me angry during the entire fight over Act 10 was after I read that letter. They were right. I didn’t mind threats against me, but I was infuriated that these thugs would try to draw my family into it.

Well, just a few weeks later, when protesters screamed at elected officials, threatened them and created a “climate of hate” in Madison, their actions were met with silence from these same quarters. Protesters followed us around the state, assaulted police vehicles, harassed Republican legislators and vandalized their homes. One day, someone scattered dozens of .22-caliber bullets across the Capitol grounds.

It wasn't just the protesters who engaged in

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In his moving speech after the Giffords shooting, President Obama declared, “at



a time when our discourse has become so sharply polarized, at a time when we are far too eager to lay the blame for all that ails the world at the feet of those who happen to think differently than we do, it's important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we're talking with each other in a way that — that heals, not in a way that wounds."

Those words apparently fell on deaf ears in Madison.

Ultimately, the unions took their stand in Wisconsin because of the unprecedented nature of our reforms. We did not simply go after the money — the lavish benefits the unions had extorted from taxpayers over the years. We dismantled the entire system of corruption and cronyism by which the unions perpetuated their political power and dictated spending decisions to state and local government. We took the reins of power from the union bosses and put the taxpayers back in charge.

Normally, they would have succeeded in thwarting our efforts. But two things suggested to me that we had a unique opportunity to do something that might be impossible at any other time: We had the votes, and we had no choice. We were in a fiscal hole with no way out. I didn't lead our party into this fight when we had a budget surplus. It wasn't like I was Evel Knievel saying, "I wonder if I can jump this canyon"

just for the sake of jumping over a canyon. I did it because we had a \$3.6 billion deficit and no practical way to close it.

One night we were standing in our bedroom and [Tonette] turned to me, visibly upset, and said: "Scott, why are you doing this?"

The question took me aback. At first, I thought she was blaming me for the protests. But it was more than that.

"Why are these people so upset with you?" Tonette demanded to know. "You got what you



wanted. Why are you pushing this?"

I had just assumed that Tonette understood why our reforms were necessary. The fact that she didn't was a wake-up call to me. If my own wife didn't see why we needed to change collective bargaining, how could I expect the voters of Wisconsin to see it? I was obviously doing a lousy job of explaining our reforms.

Before we had introduced Act 10, we had methodically gone through every aspect

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I figured the people of Wisconsin had just elected me to make bold changes, and had sent me to Madison backed by strong Republican majorities in both houses — so they expected us to go ahead and take bold action.



I knew I was doing the right thing, but I had not taken the time to explain why it was the right thing to do. I wish that on my first day in office, I'd told the taxpayers how, under collective bargaining, school districts were forced to buy health insurance from just one company that happened to be affiliated with the teachers union — and that it cost them tens of millions of dollars more than it had to because there was no competition.

The citizens would have told me to go ahead and fix the problem. I wish I had pointed out that because of overtime rules in a collective bargaining agreement, there were bus drivers in the city of Madison who made more than the mayor. If I had explained these things, the people would have said to me: “Fix it.”

But I had not done that. Now the Democrats and union activists were charging that I wanted to take away workers’ “rights,” and my fellow citizens (including my own wife) were asking, “Why has he got these folks all upset?”

I had to start making the case for our reforms, or I would lose the citizens of our state. I started with the citizen closest to me. Tonette is an excellent political barometer for me because she is like a lot of Wisconsin voters — smart and well-read, but focused on things other than politics. Despite being married to me, her life is centered not on events in Madison but on raising our two sons, her work at the American Lung Association, and her volunteer work with teens and young adults recovering from substance abuse. She is your typical informed voter.



Now here she was, demanding to know: “Why are these protesters in front of our house? Why is this so important that it is worth all this grief to our family?” We talked it over and prayed about it together.

Eventually, I convinced her that our reforms were a necessary course of action and worth the pain and grief they were causing our family. That gave me hope. If I could convince Tonette, I could probably convince most of our citizens as well. ■



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## *Economic growth is tied closely to a math-smart culture. This is a problem for the Badger State.*

By Eric A. Hanushek and Paul E. Peterson

The nation was transfixed in 2011 when Gov. Scott Walker pushed for major changes in the pay and benefits of public employees, resulting in massive protests at the Capitol. Publicly, the motivation for this was the state's precarious fiscal situation, but the subtext was a move to change the collective bargaining rights of public employees — notably teachers. The media quickly focused on the battle that pitted the governor and his legislative allies against the current employees of the schools.

But that was perhaps the wrong way to view the situation. Little to no mention was made of the state of those schools. Between 1992 and 2011, the improvement in achievement by Wisconsin students was the fourth worst of the 41 states for which data are available.

In that relatively short time, Wisconsin moved from sixth to 14th in the rankings. This signaled a fundamental set of problems ranging from the future earnings of Wisconsin students to the growth and prosperity of the entire state.

And, yes, it has ramifications for the nation as a whole.

The import of achievement for long-run economic outcomes is the subject of our new book, *Endangering Prosperity: A Global View of the American School*. Along with Ludger Woessmann, our colleague from Munich, we have considered not only the performance of the United States from an international perspective but also the position of each state. To understand the implications of achievement for the citizens — and especially the children — of Wisconsin fully, we begin with the national story.

Since the 1960s, researchers have developed the capacity both to measure achievement of U.S. students and to ascertain how this compares to students in other countries. These assessments jointly tell an alarming story. Only 32 percent of U.S. high school students are proficient in math, according to the National Assessment

of Educational Progress, often called “the nation’s report card.” More startling, this puts us in 32nd place in the world among political jurisdictions surveyed by the Program for International Student Assessment.

The percentage proficient in Germany, for example, is 45 percent; in Canada, it is 49 percent; and in Singapore, the highest performing independent nation, it is 63 percent.

The story carries over to the top end of achievement. We have all heard of the need to expand and deepen our STEM education — science, technology, engineering and math. The United States has led the world in innovation, and this in turn has made our country rich. But the percentage of high-achieving math students in the United States — and in most individual states — is shockingly below that of many of world’s leading industrialized nations.

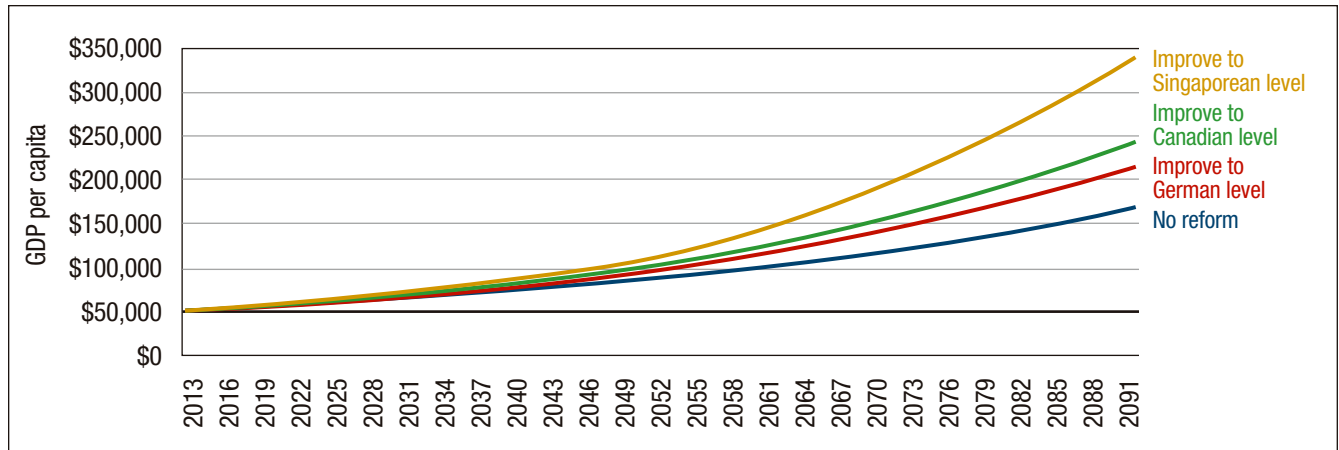
All that might be mere cocktail chatter were math skills not so critical for the nation’s economic productivity. Variations in math and science skills translate into dramatic differences in economic growth rates.

We’ve simulated what would happen to the U.S. gross domestic product if we improved student achievement over the next 20 years to levels currently seen in our international competitors. The chart on Page 28 traces the

Between 1992 and 2011, the improvement in achievement by Wisconsin students was the fourth worst in the nation.



## The impact of skill improvement in the U.S.



Projected development of real GDP per capita over the next 80 years depending on whether the U.S. does not improve its skills or enacts an educational reform that gradually lifts student achievement to the level of Germany, Canada or Singapore.

Source: Authors' calculations.

alternate paths of GDP per capita that history indicates are likely if we could raise the achievement of our students — and thus raise the skills of our future workforce.

If the United States could lift its performance just to the Canadian level, the present value of benefits over the next 80 years would be some five times our current gross domestic product. That translates to an average 20 percent salary increase for every employed member of society for the next eight decades.

With economic returns of that magnitude, concerns about the rising cost of Medicare, Social Security, defense spending and public indebtedness can be reduced from overwhelming to quite manageable. Yet, despite the need for a rapidly growing economy to tackle our outsized problems, the United States tolerates a performance of 17-year-olds today that is no higher than that of their peers in 1970. As a recent commission led by Joel Klein, former chancellor of the New York schools, and Condoleezza Rice, former secretary of state, put it: “America’s failure to educate is affecting its national security.”

**Wisconsin has more students on average who are proficient in math — 37 percent — than America as a**

whole but lags far behind neighboring Minnesota, where the figure is 43 percent. In international comparisons, Wisconsin falls between Austria and the Slovak Republic.

Similarly, the Badger State fares slightly better than the U.S. average in its percentage of students advanced in math, 8 percent. But, again, it has slipped in rankings and now falls far behind its immediate neighbor to the west (11.5 percent) and even further behind Massachusetts (15 percent). Massachusetts, in turn, falls far behind such places as Singapore and Shanghai.

Excusniks say the U.S. numbers are phony, because so many more Americans remain in high school than their counterparts elsewhere. But, in fact, the high school graduation rate in the United States is only at the average rate for all countries in the industrialized world.

Other excuses also abound. One of the most popular is to blame the situation on immigrants and minorities. We, too, decry the lack of educational opportunity provided to many attending urban schools — only 15 percent of Hispanic high school students are math proficient and, shockingly, only 11 percent of African American students are.

But the educational performance of white students, at

42 percent in both Wisconsin and in the nation as a whole, is still well below that of all Dutch students (49 percent), all Swiss students (53 percent), all Koreans (58 percent), and all students of 13 other political jurisdictions PISA surveyed. Fixing American education will take much more than redesigning the schools of Chicago, Los Angeles, Milwaukee and Washington, D.C.

The truth is that even Wisconsin students from educated families are struggling. In eight states, including Minnesota, a majority of students from college-educated families are at least proficient in math. That is not the case in Wisconsin.

It hasn't always been this way.



## Historically, Wisconsin has had strong schools.

In 1992, when NAEP first provided a comparative picture of performance, Wisconsin was sixth in the nation out of the 41 states that voluntarily participated in the testing. But when we consider changes in performance for Wisconsin in the same way that we judged that of the aforementioned nations, we see that Wisconsin had the fourth worst growth performance of the 41 states, and its ranking dropped to 14th.

In short, Wisconsin's student achievement rates in math, reading and science have grown but not nearly as fast as almost anywhere else in the United States. Since 1992, Wisconsin's achievement has grown slower than all but Iowa, Maine and Oklahoma. States making the largest gains — places like Maryland, Florida and Delaware — have been improving at a rate two to three times the rate in states with the smallest gains.

Those favoring the current system typically argue that all would be better if we just put more money into the system. But the data of the last two decades show that this is not the answer — especially in Wisconsin. Across states, there is no relationship between increases in

funding on schools and improvements in achievement. Moreover, Wisconsin stands out. It has increased its spending since 1990 at almost precisely the national average, only to get achievement gains that fall at the bottom of the nation.

The legislative actions in 2011 inspired by Walker's Act 10 were aimed at the fiscal imbalances, but they also included famously the moves to change the bargaining dynamic of schools and unions. Importantly, they opened up considerable flexibility for local districts to take new, bold action. As Christian D'Andrea describes in the fall 2013 edition of *Education Next*, there are

signs of a number of experiments in changing the hiring, staffing and administration of districts.

What will the results be?

The best evidence available suggests that Wisconsin is moving in a generally productive direction. States that improve employ a strong overall accountability system but then permit districts wide flexibility to find the tools to get the job done. Thus, the structure made possible by Act 10 is consistent with research evidence.

It is of course too early to tell whether the actual operations of the schools will bring Wisconsin back to its 1992 U.S. position and thus elevate it in international comparisons. But that something dramatic was needed can hardly be disputed. Gov. Scott Walker is to be applauded for taking action in the face of intense opposition. ■

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*Eric A. Hanushek is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, and Paul E. Peterson is professor of government at Harvard University and also a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. Together with Ludger Woessmann of the University of Munich, they recently published *Endangering Prosperity: A Global View of the American School* (Brookings, 2013).*





# ‘The Real World’ in Wausau

*When Rachel Campos-Duffy failed to land a spot on ‘The View,’ she realized she had more important work*

It’s a hot August morning in Wausau, and one of U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy’s most important constituents expects him to do some heavy lifting.

“The chairs and the loveseat,” Rachel Campos-Duffy says into her cell phone. “To the upholsterer. The guy’s got the shop in his house. No, there is no sign. It’s the second house past that puny little bridge. On the left.”

There’s a pause. “The left!” she says, then adds “Love you, too!”

She hangs up and smiles apologetically. “We’re moving this week, so it’s good Congress is in recess. I’ve got a million things for him to do, and he’s got a truck.”

They are moving from Weston to Wausau. There are some beautiful, big, old houses in Wausau, “but mine’s not one of them!” she adds with a laugh.

And they are moving themselves, with the help of their children, friends and the teenage sons of friends. “I don’t need movers. I’ve got six kids, and they can all carry boxes.”

For a former TV personality and published author, Campos-Duffy is delightfully down-to-earth. And for a woman with degrees in economics and international studies, she is completely at home as a wife and mother.

Campos-Duffy met her husband in 1998, when both were selected to reprise their roles on the MTV reality series “The Real World,” in which random

housemates were thrown together and then filmed 20 to 22 hours a day.

She appeared in the show’s third season, “The Real World: San Francisco,” in 1994; Sean Duffy was featured in the 1997 offering, “The Real World: Boston.”

“It was good training for both of us; we’ve been in the public eye a long time,” she says.

“I had just finished my undergrad degree at Arizona State, and it sounded like fun,” she remembers of six months living in a house with six strangers.

“We wore microphones all the time, and the only place the cameras didn’t go was in the bathroom.”

A self-described military brat, Campos-Duffy was raised a strict Catholic. Her Mexican-American father met her Spanish mother in Madrid when he was stationed there with the U.S. Air Force. Campos-Duffy, who has one sister and two brothers, was born in England, and lived in Spain, Turkey and Peru while growing up. In her 20s, she also lived in Caracas, Venezuela, while working for the U.S. State Department as a summer intern, and in Kerala, India, as well.

On “The Real World,” her conservative political views antagonized her more liberal housemates, helping fuel the interpersonal conflicts that the producers were looking for.

After the show ended, she hung around Southern

California, doing television work and attending the University of California-San Diego to earn her master's degree.

In 1998, she and Duffy were selected to appear on MTV's "Road Rules: All Stars," in which they traveled around the East Coast of the United States and in New Zealand and Los Angeles in a Winnebago motor home with four other people.

"The first moment we met is captured on camera," she says. Within a year, they were married.

Duffy was finishing law school at the time in St. Paul, Minn. Meanwhile, Campos-Duffy had caught the eye

## *Campos-Duffy agrees with her congressman husband that the U.S. needs immigration reform.*

of Barbara Walters, doyenne of the daytime talk show "The View," who was looking for a token conservative to join the cast.

"They were looking for someone young. But why, I don't know: 20-somethings don't watch 'The View,'" she says. "Sean and I made a deal: If I got the job, he would move to New York. If I didn't, I would move to Hayward.

"He was tricky," she says with a grin. "He first took me to Wisconsin in August, to a cabin on a lake up north. And you know how beautiful the lakes are. I had never lived in a small town before, and I found it very charming."

She didn't get the job and moved to Hayward after he finished law school.

Then came her first Wisconsin winter.

She laughs and rolls her eyes. "It took me a year to lose my fashion sense and learn how to dress for warmth instead of looks. But now I've got my UGGs. I love the snow, I love Christmas — I just love Wisconsin."

They lived in Hayward for two years, then moved

to Ashland so Sean Duffy could be assistant district attorney for Ashland County.

He was appointed to the DA's job when Michael Gableman, now a Wisconsin Supreme Court justice, left to become a Burnett County Circuit Court judge. Duffy was re-elected four times with no opposition; he resigned in 2010 to run successfully for the 7th District congressional seat.

The family then moved to the Wausau area to be closer to an airport so it would be easier for Duffy to fly back and forth to Washington, D.C.

Their family was growing. Their six children are Evita Pilar, 13; Xavier Jack, 11; Lucia-Belen, 9; John-Paul, 7; Paloma Pilar, 5, and MariaVictoria Margarita, 3.

**These days, Campos-Duffy devotes what little** free time she has to an organization called the Libre Initiative. She began it as an effort to lure Hispanic voters to Republican causes but has since expanded its message to help Hispanics achieve the American dream through education and hard work — much as her Hispanic parents raised her to do.

"One of the saddest things I see today is our kids being told the American dream is dead," she says.

"But it isn't, especially not among Hispanics," she insists. She says Hispanics create small businesses at three times the rate of other Americans "but they don't get a lot of credit for that.

"Instead," she said, referring to a famous speech by President Barack Obama, "they get told 'You didn't build that.'"

"The pope said, 'We get our dignity from earning our bread.' That's what I'm afraid we're losing in this country when we replace work with welfare — our dignity."

She agrees with her congressman husband that the United States needs immigration reform, but says the idea that some illegal immigrants should "self-deport" themselves back to their native countries is ridiculous.

"If there is an economic demand for labor — whether in agriculture or in high tech — we need to have an immigration system that responds to that,"



she says.

"I support giving the 11 million undocumented [immigrants] a legal status that allows them to live and work here free of fear," she adds.

"If they want to become citizens of this great nation, they can apply for citizenship the way everyone else does. I don't think offering them a 'special pathway,' or an expressway to the front of the line, is fair to the millions of people who are already in line. There are folks who have been waiting for years. We have to be fair to them, too."

**Somewhere in the midst of all that child-raising and moving, "The View" called again — and once again, after weeks of auditioning, Campos-Duffy didn't get the job.**

"When I didn't get it the second time, I thought I



was going to be upset. I had been telling myself that I was 'between gigs.' But then I realized I really love being a stay-at-home mom," she says.

And home means Wisconsin. "I live here," she says simply. "I hardly ever go to Washington with Sean."

Even though motherhood is "one of the most unappreciated jobs in the world," she says, today's mothers don't face some of the problems their own mothers faced.

### ***She works with the Libre Initiative, a group that helps Hispanics achieve the American dream.***

"The isolation is gone. We've got the Internet, cell phones, mini-vans.... It's a choice. It's work that has its own dignity and, frankly, it's really important. I like being the CEO of my house."

In fact, she threw herself into motherhood so enthusiastically, she decided to write a book about it. *Stay Home, Stay Happy: 10 Secrets to Loving At-Home Motherhood*, was published in 2009; most of the reviews at Amazon.com are positive.

"Writing a book was hard work," she says, remembering how she would write at night, after getting the kids into bed. "Ugh. It was kind of like having a baby — you don't know what you're getting into."

Nor was she fully aware what she was getting into when she married a future politician.

Sean Duffy is a real Northwoods kind of guy, born and raised in Hayward.

He worked his way through college and law school by entering professional lumberjack competitions, including logrolling and speed-climbing. In 2003, he appeared as both a competitor and commentator on ESPN's "Great Outdoor Games."

For all that, his wife says, "He's not real handy around the house. He can chop wood, but that's about it." ■

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*Sunny Schubert is a Monona freelance writer and blogger and a former editorial writer for the Wisconsin State Journal.*



# Bursting UW's Glass Bubble

***Long a champion of labor activism, the School for Workers is trying to recast its efforts at a time of declining union relevance***

BY CHRISTIAN SCHNEIDER

In his 1988 book *America*, French philosopher Jean Baudrillard attempted to explain the intricacies of United States culture for a European audience. In one passage, Baudrillard relayed a science fiction story he had heard about a group of rich people who awoke one day to find that they had been encircled by a giant, impenetrable glass bowl. This obstacle left them separate from “the real universe from which they are cut off, which has suddenly become the ideal world.” Wrapping up his metaphor, Baudrillard noted that in America, “some of the university campuses remind me of this.”

Indeed, American universities are famous for harboring individuals with ideas that wouldn't be taken seriously outside the glass walls of campus. If you believed the events of Sept. 11 were a government-planned inside job, there may be a comfortable spot for you in the University of Wisconsin System, as there was for former instructor Kevin Barrett. Or take the English professor at Virginia Tech who urged people to stop saying "support the troops," because the phrase is "trite and tiresome."

Some argue that universities also remain comfortable nesting places for outdated ideas that border on archaic. They point to organizations like the UW School for Workers, which promotes workplace unionism and teaches students about organizing tactics — while outside the bubble, the American economy has walked away from unionization.

The numbers suggest how out-of-the-mainstream the union movement currently is. Early in 2013, the share of American workers in a union fell to 11.3 percent, a 97-year low. Just last year, the number of unionized workers dropped by 400,000, to 14.3 million, even as the U.S. workforce increased by 2.4 million. Government remains the most accommodating employer for unions, as only 6.6 percent of private sector workers are unionized, after peaking at around 35 percent in the 1950s.

Following Gov. Scott Walker's successful effort to curtail union bargaining power in 2011, the drop in union membership in Wisconsin has been even more stark. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, union membership dropped by an unusually large 13 percent in 2012. Georgia State University labor economist Barry T. Hirsch has calculated that this drop amounts to a loss of

48,000 union members in Wisconsin last year, to 139,000 from 187,000.

The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* has reported that the Wisconsin Education Association Council — the state's primary teachers union — has lost more than 50 percent of its 98,000 dues paying members since Walker implemented collective bargaining reform. The powerful Wisconsin State Employees Union is now down from 22,000 members to between 9,000 and 10,000 members, according to the union's president.

**'Both business and worker kind of relationships are far more participatory these days, far more collaborative and less adversarial,' says Chancellor Raymond Cross.**

Yet the state of Wisconsin still drops nearly \$1 million per year into the UW Extension's School for Workers, apparently to fight the natural course of the marketplace. This makes up a very small portion of the UW Extension's \$232 million annual budget, but critics wonder if the program has any relevance in the current economy.

**The UW School for Workers is notable because** it was the first university labor education department created in the United States. Rooted in the socialist movement and the progressivism of "Fighting Bob" LaFollette, the school was originally founded in the early 1920s to address the plight of women in the workplace. In 1927, the Wisconsin Federation of Labor began recruiting male students to the UW-Madison to take part in the program. The university saw the



school as a natural component of the “Wisconsin Idea,” which envisioned a wide mission for the university.

In the early 1930s, the department was funded with private and federal money. But as the decade moved on, organized labor began financing more of the school, causing some to worry that the faculty was too closely tied to the Socialist Party.



Consequently, at the behest of controversial UW economist John R. Commons, the School for Workers was formed in 1937 and supported with university funds. (Commons, a white supremacist and eugenicist, had been fired from his previous job at Syracuse University for being a “radical.”)

To keep up with the increase in unionization, labor programs began cropping up in universities across the nation between 1935 and 1950. At one point, more than 53 university-sponsored labor education programs were operating in the

United States. In her 1946 book, *Labor Education in Universities*, author Caroline Ware declared the purpose of labor education was “to enable workers to understand their experience, their problems and the issues of the day, and to equip them to function effectively as union members and as citizens.”

But lately, due to the combination of university budget cuts and the steep decline in union jobs in manufacturing, labor education programs have been disappearing. A 2004 study by the University of Minnesota found only 20 survivors. In 2002, even the University of Wisconsin discontinued its Industrial Relations Institute, a graduate program that prepared students “to assume important organizational roles in government, labor and the private sector.”

The UW certainly embraced that vision. But the irony is that although the School for Workers has existed for nearly 80 years, UW faculty and academic staff weren’t allowed to unionize until June 2009, when Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle signed a budget provision allowing professors to collectively bargain for wages and benefits. That enabling law was short-lived, however, as Republican Gov. Scott Walker repealed it just two years later.

**But while the school’s professors themselves** weren’t unionized, it didn’t keep the faculty members from injecting themselves into high-profile labor matters around the state. In 2003, faculty member Corliss Olson marched on the picket line in support of workers during a high-profile strike against Tyson Foods at the company’s Jefferson plant. At the demonstration, which included chants, sign-making and heckling of replacement workers, Olson was joined by



75 attendees of a five-day conference hosted by the school. She would later become the school's director.

Such pro-labor conferences were often sponsored by the department. In 1996, the School for Workers put on a two-day conference called "How to Fight Contracting Out," which taught unionized government workers how to thwart consolidation and costs savings by their local government employers.

"It is ridiculous that our tax dollars support a UW Extension program focused on obstructing innovation in how those very tax dollars are spent," Republican Margaret Farrow, then a state senator, said at the time. Farrow vowed to cut funding to the School for Workers "until it stops trying to block public-private cooperation."

But perhaps the school's most militant pro-union faculty member in recent history has been Frank Emspak, who, while a professor in the department, also worked for a radio and print news service called Workers Independent News. Emspak's employment with WIN drew the ire of state Rep. Steve Nass (R-Whitewater), who ripped the department for allowing Emspak to use his campus e-mail for WIN fundraising appeals and for also providing a link to WIN on the department's official website. In 2013, Emspak left teaching to become a professor emeritus.

The department's overt pro-union activism finally provoked legislative Republicans into action in 2007, when Nass inserted an amendment to prevent the extension from using tax dollars to fund the School for Workers in the 2007-'09 biennial budget. Nass' plan passed the GOP-led

Assembly, but was removed from the budget during final negotiations with the Democratic-led Senate.

Corliss Olson, now the school's director, objected to Nass' actions. "We have this urgent need to create jobs," she told *Isthmus* in 2011. "Our bias is that they ought to be good jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage." In 2012, the school signed on to sponsor an exhibit called "Art in Protest" that featured examples of the pro-union signs and artwork created during the anti-Walker Capitol protests in 2011.

Under pressure from legislators, the school quickly canceled its involvement in the event.

**While Nass has been the School for Workers' most aggressive critic, he hasn't re-introduced his plan to eliminate the department since 2007 — this despite the fact that Republicans have had full control of the Legislature and governor's office since January 2011. Further, GOP lawmakers haven't been shy about trying to eliminate funding for UW-related organizations they deem overly liberal, including the Center for Investigative Journalism and the student-run United Council.**

Nass' staff says the Capitol art show reversal was an example of UW Extension's willingness to re-examine its direct participation in such politically charged events. "We made a case for why they should understand how such an activity looks to citizens throughout the state, not just Madison," says Nass spokesperson Mike Mikalsen.

Nass believes there is a "renewed commitment" toward the school focusing on training of management and labor reps in the most current

**Only 6.6 percent of private-sector workers are unionized, after peaking at around 35 percent in the 1950s.**

negotiating techniques and other workplace cooperation methods. “They would like to methodically re-position as an impartial resource for both sides,” says Mikalsen. “This will obviously take a long time.”

It is clear that UW Extension Chancellor Raymond Cross is taking steps to change perceptions of the school.

Cross, who took office in February 2011, says the School for Workers “serves a purpose,” but that it “probably has to change some as the whole workplace changes.”

“Both business and worker kind of relationships are far more participatory these days, far more collaborative and less adversarial,” notes Cross. He adds that the school will continue to be relevant as long as it can “adapt to meet the needs of the new workplace.”

Cross believes those changes are already under way, and says that he wants to help the faculty shift its focus. The school isn’t changing simply because more ardent union supporters, like Frank Emspak, have moved on, he says. He emphasizes that teaching students about issues like workers compensation and workplace safety have value, as does teaching businesses how to effectively manage their labor forces. “We try very hard to be an unbiased source of information,” says Cross.

It’s perhaps telling that two business groups — Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce — that might be expected to challenge the School for Workers had nothing to say for this story.

Mikalsen, though, points out that even with the chancellor’s top-down commitment to change,

**Skeptics wonder if the school will ever really change, given the activist inclination of its faculty.**

members of the School for Workers faculty “still have a tendency to get dragged into one side of labor disputes.”

For instance, the fact that the school signed on to the “Art in Protest” exhibit at all signals the inherent biases of the department. “Obviously, legislative pressure had some impact” in the

department’s decision to pull out, concedes Cross. But he maintains that the school discontinued its sponsorship due to a “combination of several things,” including his desire to maintain the extension’s neutrality with regard to the Capitol protests.

Even more recently, School for Workers staff have spoken encouragingly in support of workers striking in high-profile work actions against their employers. Earlier this year, the National Labor Relations Board upheld a previous decision that Palermo’s Pizza had not acted inappropriately in requiring immigration status for its employees. As a result of the immigration audit, 75 workers lost their jobs; labor activists believed it was payback for attempting to unionize.

When contacted by *The Capital Times* news site, School for Workers associate professor Armando Ibarra praised the “gutsy” Palermo’s workers. “Even if they are not victorious, they can inspire people in other workplaces,” said Ibarra.

Such rhetoric prompts skeptics to wonder if the department will actually ever really change, given the activist inclination of the faculty members it attracts.

“Trust but verify is the approach we take with them,” says Mikalsen. ■

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*Christian Schneider writes for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, National Review and other national outlets.*



## Free market paths to better lives

The last two in a long line of eight brothers and sisters, 17-year-old Aaron and 13-year-old Ildeliza Martin attend different schools.

Aaron, a rugby player and scholar carrying an A average, is a senior at St. Anthony High School on Milwaukee's south side who plans to study finance and management in college. Like virtually all students there, he benefits from the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program.

Ildeliza gets a ride each morning to Morgandale, a Milwaukee public school where she has learned to read and write and play soccer and basketball in the same way other kids do, though a little less rapidly because she has Down syndrome.

Aaron and Ildeliza's parents, Jose and Ninfa, have no complaints about the way she has been treated. Morgandale, they say, is a good place. But they're not sure which school Ildeliza, who will remain in school until she is 21, will attend next.

While schools in the choice program do take children with disabilities, they are often limited by finances and by the layout of older buildings. Jose has some qualms, meanwhile, about South Division, the high school some of his older children attended. South Division, he says, can be a rough place, and Ildeliza is the sort of gentle child who likes to pray out loud before she eats.

If a special needs scholarship program were to become law in Wisconsin, children like her could have more options to attend different public or private schools. Such programs in other states give children with special needs the same nurturing and opportunities already offered to their siblings — kids like Aaron.

**I have a special interest, I will concede, in kids with special needs, mostly because of my brother-in-law Augie,**

who had Down syndrome. Back when I was a newspaper columnist, I wrote about Augie at the end of his life, and it's the one thing I've ever written that we have framed and hanging in our home.

But I have an interest in special needs scholarships for another reason as well. Last year, before I took over the presidency of WPRI, I wrote a WPRI white paper explaining how Wisconsin's current system for educating kids with special needs is deficient. They deserve a better path and the opportunity to pursue the most fulfilling lives possible.

That, in fact, is precisely how I think about WPRI's mission. Through research, commentary, events, our magazine, podcasts and even video, we hope to show the value of free markets — whether it be in education or in pursuit of economic prosperity — in helping all Wisconsinites achieve the lives and happiness they deserve.

## WPRI celebrates success stories like siblings Aaron, 17, and Ildeliza, 13.

You can find out what we're up to at our newly designed website, [www.wpri.org](http://www.wpri.org). WPRI will always offer high-quality, fair and non-partisan research. But we hope to tell more stories about folks like Aaron and Ildeliza, who will benefit from those policies as well.

Aaron has a diligence about him. He credits St. Anthony for its focus on academics and its individualized attention. His parents say he has never missed a day of school. He "might have a chance for a college scholarship," says Jose, who emigrated from Mexico and never had the opportunity to earn a high school or college degree.

Ildeliza, friendly and trusting, likes to read books like *High School Musical* and to hang out with her much younger nieces and nephews. If she qualifies for a scholarship to attend high school, says Jose, "it would be great." If not, he says he hopes someone else with special needs will someday have what he calls "the privilege" of attending a school like the one Aaron has enjoyed. ■

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*Formerly a senior fellow at the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, Mike Nichols became its president this past summer when George Lightbourn retired.*

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