**Fiscal Facts: Background of Wisconsin Lawmakers**

At the start of the 2017 Legislature, the average age of the legislators was 50 years for representatives and 58 for senators. Most legislators had university or technical college degrees. In the 2017 Legislature, one had a PhD, one was a veterinary doctor, nine had law degrees, 20 had master’s degrees, 58 had bachelor’s degrees, and four had associate degrees. They also came from a variety of occupational backgrounds (e.g., six were practicing attorneys and 56 listed themselves as “full-time legislators”). Additional occupations included farmer, newspaper publisher, labor arbitrator, realtor, and librarian. In 2017, women occupied 31 seats in the legislature.

In 2017, Wisconsin legislators received an annual salary of $50,950. Lawmakers also receive a daily payment when they are in Dane County on legislative business. In 2015, the Assembly set its per diem at up to $157 for an overnight stay, and up to $78.50 for a day visit. Representatives may claim a maximum of 153 days a year for per diems in the Assembly. In the Senate, members receive a flat $115 per diem if they reside outside Dane County, and $57.50 if they live in Dane County.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education.*