



WISCONSIN POLICY FORUM

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10 Important Questions for Candidates This Fall *Nonpartisan, Independent Wisconsin Policy Forum Frames Key Issues in State Races*

MADISON—With the November 6 election looming, Wisconsin voters will face a barrage of TV ads, charges, and counter-charges – while some major issues will likely be left on the sidelines.

The latest edition of *The Wisconsin Taxpayer*, “The 2018 State Elections: 10 Key Questions for Candidates,” highlights key issues that should be addressed by the candidates running for governor and the Wisconsin legislature this fall. The questions touch on topics related to transportation, Wisconsin’s economy and workforce, education, state-local relations, taxes, and the state’s financial health.

The questions emanate from recent research by the independent, nonpartisan Wisconsin Policy Forum (WPF). WPF was created this year by the merger of the Madison-based Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance and the Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum; both groups had long traditions of examining Wisconsin state and local government and sharing that research with citizens.

“Our mission is to provide facts and context in an impartial way to promote more informed and data-driven decision-making on major issues,” said WPF President Rob Henken. “Voters are the most important decision-makers in the election process, and we want to share with them findings from our recent research that are most relevant to this fall’s state races.”

Each question refers to WPF research on the subject so voters have data and analysis to consider when reviewing the candidates’ positions. The questions include:

- **On transportation:** What changes, if any, to state revenue sources would you support to meet the state’s transportation needs? If you would not increase revenues, how would you reduce spending in order to adapt to more modest revenue growth?
- **On Wisconsin’s economy and workforce:** What policies should the state pursue to attract and retain the employees needed to maintain Wisconsin’s workforce over the next 20 years, or how should Wisconsin prepare instead for a smaller, older workforce?
- **On education:** Should the current general aids system for K-12 schools be changed? Should state funding for the UW System budget increase and, if so, by how much?

- **On taxes:** Given the state's advances in lowering its overall tax burden in recent years, do you think additional progress needs to be made in this area, and, if so, how would you achieve it? Would you support changes to the state's current tax structure in order to promote greater balance and equity or other goals?
- **On Wisconsin's fiscal health:** Although the state's "rainy day fund" and other fund balances have improved in recent years, its reserves to weather financial downturns still remain behind many other states, a situation that leaves it vulnerable to higher-than-predicted costs or lower-than-expected revenue. What, if anything would you do to even out this boom-or-bust budgeting cycle and build up the state's reserves?

"These are important questions that will have long-term consequences for Wisconsin's economy and quality of life and they cannot be reduced to simple sound bites," Henken said. "We look forward to hearing them discussed by candidates for state office in the weeks ahead and to the serious and informed discussion that voters deserve."

Henken said WPF has provided both major-party candidates for governor – incumbent Republican Scott Walker and Democratic challenger Tony Evers – with the questions and plans to publish their responses in an upcoming edition of the *Taxpayer*.

A copy of The Wisconsin Taxpayer can be found at: <https://wispolicyforum.org/research/the-2018-state-elections-10-key-questions-for-candidates/>