

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MANY WISCONSIN RESIDENTS WOULD SUPPORT TARGETED TAX HIKES TO PRESERVE KEY PUBLIC SERVICES, NEW POLL SHOWS

**Madison**—A new poll shows that nearly 60 percent of Wisconsin voters would support combining tax increases with spending curbs in order to stave off deeper cuts in public services.

The polling data were presented today at a major conference, “Financing Wisconsin's Future: Politics, Economics, and Public Opinion,” sponsored by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) and the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF). “The purpose of this conference is to get a more informed and civil discussion of state financing going than we’ve had to date,” said Joel Rogers, director of COWS. “We were struck by how little is known in depth about the public’s view on this, which is why we commissioned the poll. The results are pretty striking.”

The poll was conducted by the national research firm The Feldman Group. The results are based on a random-sample phone survey of 601 likely Wisconsin voters. The margin of error is plus or minus four percent.

“What the poll shows is that people are indeed worried about service cuts,” said Charity Eleson, executive director of WCCF. “And it shows broad public support for politicians who lead with a balanced approach to our current deficit, rather than just cuts in spending.”

Among the poll’s key findings:

- Even though a large percentage of state residents (61 percent) feel their own personal taxes are too high, nearly half (49 percent) would consider paying higher taxes to prevent further cuts in public programs.
- Health care and education lead the list of essential services Wisconsin voters want to protect from further cuts.
- Strong majorities also think corporations and the rich are not paying their fair share, and favor broadening the base for the sales tax. Four in five Wisconsinites (80 percent) favor closing corporate tax loopholes, three in four (75 percent) support increasing state taxes on incomes over \$200,000, and two in three (68 percent) support taxing business goods and services that are currently exempt.
- A strong majority (58 percent) of voters say they would be more inclined to support politicians who combined revenue increases with spending cuts, rather than just cuts alone.

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Along with unveiling this poll, the “Financing Wisconsin’s Future” conference also heard from national experts on the effects of public spending on economic development, and the experience of politicians in other states in doing revenue reform. A range of local commentators from both major parties, labor, business, and other constituencies will be commenting on their findings, as well as the Feldman poll.

“We think it’s possible to bring some common sense to state financing discussions,” said Rogers. “I sure hope we’re not fools to think so.”

Conference co-sponsors include AARP, AFL-CIO, AFSCME, American Federation of Teachers, Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, Institute for Wisconsin’s Future, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, League of Women Voters, Survival Coalition, Wisconsin Citizen Action, Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Council of Churches, and the Wisconsin Education Association Council.