

Sustaining Wisconsin
A Statewide Dialogue on Wisconsin's Future

www.sustainingwisconsin.org

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Wisconsin Strengths

Good economic base

- Diversified economy, world leader in some sectors

Relative equality and supports

- 6th most equal income distribution in country
- High quality public services

Strong public education

- 2nd highest high school graduation rate in the country; #1 in ACT scores in the nation for the past 9 years
- Strong technical college and university system

Tradition of environmental and natural resources protection

- Aldo Leopold, Gaylord Nelson, John Muir, and Sigurd Olson

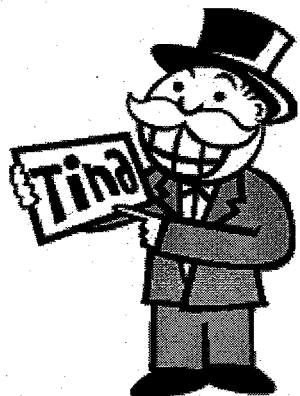
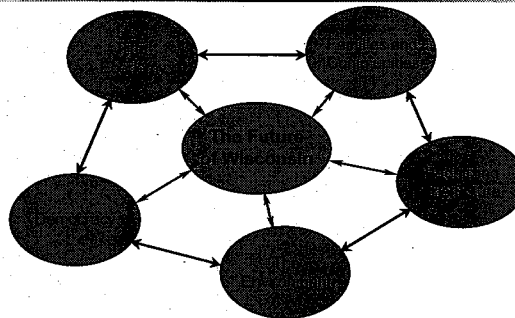
High levels of civic engagement

- 66% voter turnout in 2000 elections, 3rd highest in the USA

Wisconsin Challenges

- A generation of stagnation and decline in income growth
- Rising class and racial inequality
- Sprawl threatening to destroy farms and open lands
- Growing air and water quality problems
- Tarnished government integrity
- Chronic fiscal disorder and no planning

Choosing Our Future



Our Basic Policy Choice

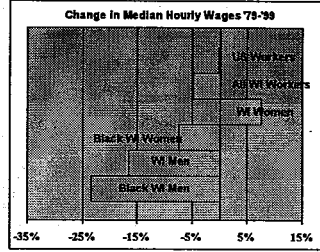


Close off the low road, help pave the high road, help workers and firms stuck on the first to ride the second, while preserving our democratic tradition of engagement and experiment, and respect for each other and the earth.

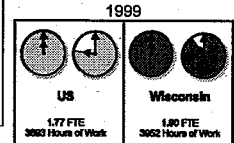
The Economy

Wages Down, Families Working More
 Growing Together, Growing Apart
 Lots of Poverty Jobs
 The Tax Burden Is Shifting...
 ...And That Burden Is Regressive

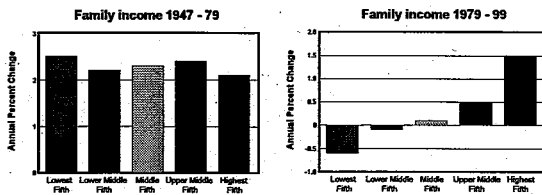
Wages Down, Families Working More



Between 1979 and 1999, Wisconsin workers' wages dropped 10 times that of U.S. wages.

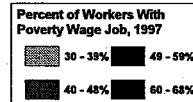


Growing Together, Tearing Apart

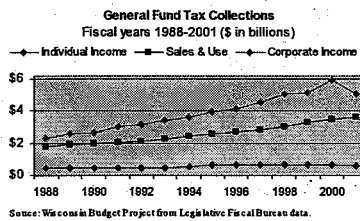


Lots of Poverty Jobs

Poverty wage = \$8.10 an hour for a family of four

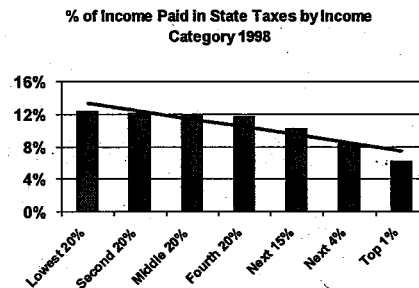


The Tax Burden Is Shifting...



The Legislature has shifted the tax burden toward individuals.

...And That Burden Is Regressive



The Economy

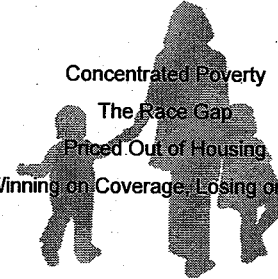
What could Wisconsin do?

- Train workers to fill higher-wage jobs.
- Gradually bring lowest wages up.
- Help companies to take the high road.
- Eliminate wasteful subsidies.
- Reform the tax system.
- Your ideas?



Families and Communities

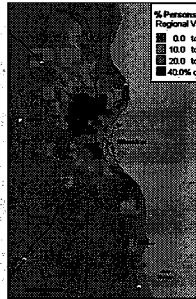
Concentrated Poverty
The Race Gap
Priced Out of Housing
Winning on Coverage, Losing on Costs



Concentrated Poverty

1980

1990



The Race Gap

- Wisconsin has the 5th best white child poverty rate in the nation. It's black child poverty rate is the 2nd worst.
- Wisconsin has the 2nd best high school graduation rate for whites in the country. It has the worst graduation rate for blacks.
- Wisconsin blacks are 23 times more likely than whites to be sent to prison for the same crime, the 2nd worst racial gap in sentencing in the United States. Blacks are also 52 times more likely to be imprisoned for drug crimes.
- Milwaukee is the 2nd most segregated city in America.

Priced Out of Housing

Fair market rent = 30% of income

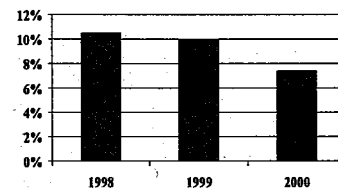
Percent of families who cannot afford Fair Market Rent



Winning on Coverage, Losing on Costs

- Co-pays are rising.
- Insured Wisconsin residents annually pay \$3,800 each in out-of-pocket medical costs.
- Health plans are expensive for employers to maintain.

Percent of Wisconsinites Without Health Insurance



Families and Communities

What could Wisconsin do?

- Promote family-supporting jobs.
- Include affordable housing in all new residential development.
- Cap insurance costs.
- Address the growing race gap.
- Your ideas?

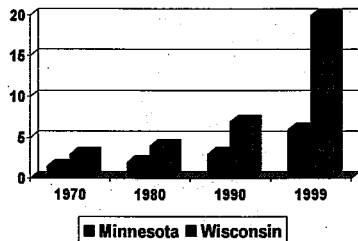


Priorities for the Future



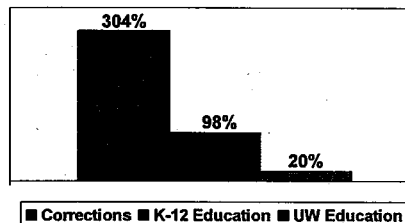
Prison Policy Choices

Prison Population of Wisconsin and Minnesota
1970-1999 (thousands of people)



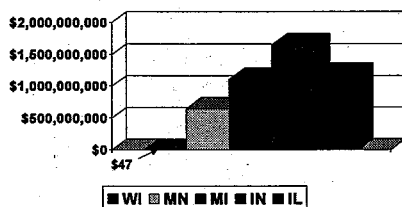
Spending Priorities

Percent Real Increase in State Spending, 1987 - 2000



Saving for a Rainy Day?

Rainy Day Reserves, 2001



Priorities for the Future

What could Wisconsin do?

- Find a better solution than "prison first" for public safety; how about "schools first, prisons last"?
- Choose a high-road economic development strategy for the state.
- Engage in responsible, long-term fiscal planning.
- Your ideas?



Environment



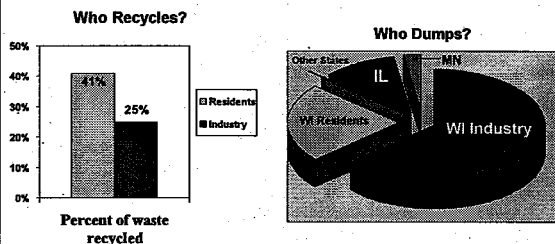
Trouble in the Air and Water

- In 1999, there was more summer smog in Door County than Milwaukee County.
- Inland lakes now contain so much mercury a general fish consumption advisory is in place.
- Poor kids still ingesting lead.
- Bad building practices generate "sick buildings" with high indoor pollution, e.g. mold.
- Disappearing frogs.

Persistent Public Health Threats

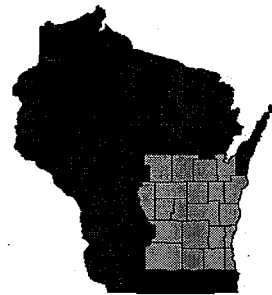
4,000 emergency room visits
 150,000 asthma attacks
 Brain damage
 Reproductive problems
 Fetal abnormalities
 Cancers
 Liver and kidney damage
 Diabetes
 Heart disease

Getting Trashed



Sprawling All Over This Land

- Since 1950, 8 million acres of farmland lost.
- In the 1990s, Wisconsin lost 380 acres of farmland per day.
- Ratio of new Madison residents to acres of lost farmland, 1910-1950, 3/1; 1950-1990, 1/1



Environment

What could Wisconsin do?

- Implement sprawl controls and regional planning.
- Develop green markets and incentives.
- Provide state funding for research on fuel cells & hybrid engines.
- Bring tipping fees in line with Illinois & Minnesota.
- Your ideas?

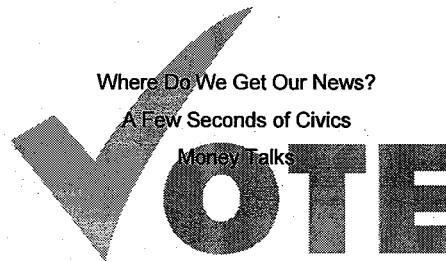


Democracy

Where Do We Get Our News?

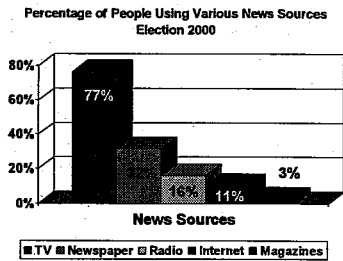
A Few Seconds of Civics

Money Talks



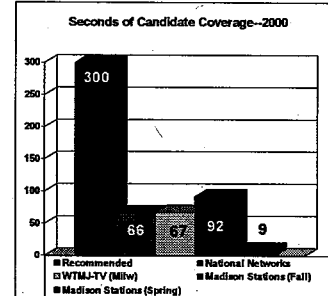
Where Do We Get Our News?

When asked about the two most popular places to get political news in the 2000 election, most people listed TV as their number one news source.



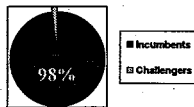
A Few Seconds of Civics

- Broadcasters give little time to candidates and issues



Money Talks

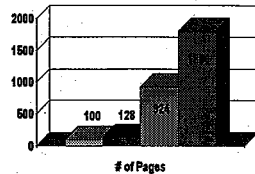
Incumbents Win Almost All Elections



Incumbents Enjoyed 9 to 1 Money Advantage in Campaigns in 2000



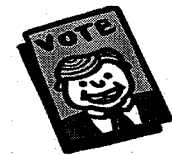
The Bulging Budget Bills



Democracy

What could Wisconsin do?

- Institute real campaign finance reform.
- Integrate civics back into school curricula.
- Keep voting easy and accessible to all.
- Prohibit non-fiscal provisions in the budget.
- Your ideas?



Finding Out More, Staying Involved...

Sustaining Wisconsin

www.sustainingwisconsin.org



- Learn more -- briefing papers, databases, regional reports freely available
- Spread the word -- tell your friends
- Sign up -- get Noos from the Field
- Stay involved -- share your ideas and let your voice be heard
- Keep 'em honest -- ask the hard questions

...And Taking Action



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