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THE NEW ADMINISTRATION AND STATE FISCAL CHOICES

by G. Donald Ferree, Jr.

Governor Jim Doyle comes into office with the opportunity for a honeymoon. The public seems favorably disposed to him, and hopeful about his leadership. At the same time, public opinion poses difficult choices for him and others dealing with the state fiscal situation. The public identifies no easy targets, and is somewhat skeptical of the need for "painful" decisions in the first place. These conclusions come from analysis of the most recent Badger Poll™, conducted by the University of Wisconsin (Madison) Survey Center, for which the Capital Times and Milwaukee Journal Sentinel served as media sponsors. The poll interviewed some 514 randomly chosen state residents between January 7 and 15th inclusive, and has a "margin of error" of just over four percent.

Some three in four "remembered" having voted in last November's election. This figure is higher than the actual turnout, but this phenomenon is quite common since people tend to overreport "doing the right thing". It is one indication, however, that the Doyle begins his term with a generally positive climate. It is worth noting, however, that younger respondents are less likely than older fellow residents to claim to have voted.

When respondents who said they had voted were asked for whom they had cast ballots, Doyle "wins" more handily than he actually did, garnering just under half the votes of those who said they participated (47%) to McCallum's three in ten (30%), with Thompson and Young accounting for 8% and 2% respectively. Again, this "overstatement" of the winner is commonplace, at least so long as there is not strong negative sentiment about the outcome.

There is something of a gender gap, with Doyle's margin clearly larger among women (51%-26%) than men (44%-33%). As would be expected, Democrats were onesidedly likely to have voted for Doyle, Republicans almost as much so for McCallum, with Independents claiming to have been more for Doyle, but not by as much as Democrats did.

So far, at least, there seems little resentment of the election outcome, although enthusiasm is somewhat lacking as well. When the question was put, "how do you feel about Doyle's victory", over half described themselves as either very pleased (19%) or somewhat so (37%), contrasted with under three in ten who claimed to be very disappointed (5%) or somewhat so (23%). Thus, sentiment on balance is favorable, but few feel strongly.

There is no sharp difference between men and women. While Democrats feel more positive (eight in ten pleased), and Republicans less so (feeling

disappointed by a five to three margin), the relative lack of strong emotion is worth noting. Among age groups, only those from thirty to forty-four failed to be more pleased than disappointed, and among this group, opinion was balanced.

The poll began the day after Doyle's inauguration, so the public has not had time to form a clear impression of his performance. But expectations tend to be positive, reinforcing the sense of atmosphere pervading the questions so far noted. Specifically, just over half think Doyle will do either and excellent (10%) or good (44%) job. One in three opt for either fair (31%) or poor (3%). These are positive figures and would be characterized as reasonable strong if they referred to actual performance, but the relative paucity of "extreme" ratings (excellent or poor, contrasted with good and fair) should be noted.

Partisan differences are relatively muted. To be sure Democrats expect more than Republicans, with Independents in the middle, but the size of the gap is modest. Again men as a group and women as a group are quite similar, and those from thirty to forty-five and less sanguine.

When it comes to relative performance, two thirds (66%) expect Doyle will do a better job than Scott McCallum did. One in eight (12%) expect he will do worse, the remainder either volunteered that he would do about the same, or otherwise did not answer the question. Confidence of improvement seems highest among Democrats, and lowest among Republicans, but on balance all groups are more likely to think Doyle will do better than that he will do worse.

If the comparison is to former Governor Tommy Thompson, however, the situation changes. Overall, respondents were more likely to say Doyle will do better (42%) than worse (34%), but opinion is much more closely split. Two thirds of Democrats think Doyle will do better, but six in ten Republicans think he will do worse than Thompson. Independents split pretty evenly. Age and gender patterns are similar to what we have seen with men as a group similar to women, and the thirty to forty-four group most critical (least appreciative) of Doyle.

One reason for the restrained enthusiasm so far noted is that there is limited optimism (to say the least) that Doyle will be able to accomplish some key objectives. First, when respondents were asked "do you think Doyle will be able to solve Wisconsin's budget problems, or don't you think so", more than half (54%) said "no", twice as many as those (25%) who thought he would be able to.

No group on balance felt he would be able to accomplish this, although Democrats were less pessimistic and Republicans most so. Those in the middle of the age distribution tended to be less sanguine than either the oldest or youngest group, with pessimism clearest in the now familiar thirty to forty-four range.

Relatedly, despite the "no new taxes" pledge voiced by both major party candidates during the campaign, and repeated by Doyle since, two residents in three think that their own state taxes next year will go up, either "a lot" (11%) or "some" (57%). One in four expect no change, and only a handful (fewer than one in twenty) expect their own levies to go down.

Independents were more likely on balance to expect a tax hike (albeit more likely "some" rather than "a lot". Men and women did not differ much. The age pattern tended to mirror that for expectations that Doyle would or would not solve the budget problem.

If expectations are modest, it is clear that tax hikes would find an unfriendly environment. Overall, seven in ten (71%) say that state taxes are too high, contrasted with one in four (26%) who find them about right, and only a handful (about 1%) who say they are too low. This sentiment is clear in all groups, though slightly more noted among Republicans and Independents than among Doyle's fellow partisans, and is markedly lower for the youngest respondents, among whom a plurality (five to four) feels taxes now are about right rather than too high.

When it comes to spending in the abstract, opposition is a bit more muted. Just under two in three (62%) call spending too high, and just under one in four (22%) feel it is about right. There is scarcely more sentiment that we should spend more than that we should be taxed more, the difference seems to be mostly in there being more uncertainty. Age patterns are similar to what was found for taxes and men and women do not sharply differ as groups.

If the issue is who should pay, the situation is rather murky. On balance, there is little sentiment for a shift in the tax burden of business. Almost half (45%) say business in Wisconsin now pays about its fair share of taxes. Those who would adjust it split pretty evenly between those who think business currently pays "more than its fair share of taxes (19%) and those who feel it pays "less than its fair share" (22%).

Opinion tends to be relatively close to balance in all groups, with Democrats and Independents a bit more likely to see business as paying too little, and Republicans feeling it pays too much IF there is a problem in either direction. In no group though is there a substantial net constituency either for "soaking business" or for giving it a relative break.

There is more room for movement when it comes the tax burden of (undefined) "upper income" people in Wisconsin. While one in three (33%) feel this group is now paying its fair share, the single most common opinion (held by 44%) is that they pay less than they should. Four times as many take this position as feel the upper income group is relatively overtaxed (11%). Women as a group are more likely to see the rich as undertaxed than are men. Sentiment that upper income people should pay more declines from a majority among Democrats to an even balance among Republicans, with Independents in the middle. The idea that the rich should pay more finds most favor among the youngest respondents, then trails off.

Most troubling, perhaps, if one sees taxes as one way out of the budget situation is that, while half of residents (53%) feel that "people like you" pay their fair share of taxes, sentiment that one overpays (43%) far outdistances the belief (held by 3%) that one is undertaxed relatively. This feeling holds across both genders, and all partisan groups, but is relatively more clear among those in the middle age categories.

Even if taxes are inherently negatively viewed, they can be acceptable insofar as they are seen as necessary. Here, however, the Doyle administration, like its predecessor, may have a problem. First of all, when asked whether a choice will have to be made between "serious service cuts and big increases in taxes", only four in ten (41%) believe such a choice must be made, while slightly more (46%) think that it is "possible to both maintain essential services and keep taxes down". No group can be said to appear convinced that this kind of serious choice is yet necessary, though the youngest group is so far most skeptical. And this sentiment is remarkably similar cross partisan lines.

In a hypothetical situation "if there is a choice this year between raising taxes or cutting state programs", by about three to two (51%-35% overall), respondents opt for cuts, even as they are less than convinced that the choice is necessary.

Here, there is a partisan split. Democrats break for tax hikes by a bit less than two to one. Republicans on the other hand opt for cuts by more than four to one, while Independents split five to three for cuts. Only among the youngest group (those under thirty) is there in the abstract support for raising taxes rather than cuts (again IF the choice is necessary).

The general resistance to the idea of higher taxes is emphasized by answers to another hypothetical: "suppose it came to cuts in a program you would like or new taxes earmarked just for that program". Four in ten (40%) would cut their own program, almost as many as the 45% who would, in that circumstance, back an "earmarked" tax.

There is a modest tendency for men to more anti-tax in this situation than women are. Republicans (cut service) are mirror images of Democrats (earmarked tax) by similar margins, Independents split relatively evenly. Only among the youngest is there clear backing (by more than three to one) for earmarked taxes.

All this is not to say that tax increases may not come to be seen as a better idea than the alternative, nor that the public is convinced any problem can be solved by minor adjustments (or by eliminating "fraud and waste"). It IS to say, however, that the case for the necessity of sharp choices, and for the acceptability of taxes as a "necessary evil" has not yet been successfully put. This takes place in a climate of low optimism that the new Governor will be able to solve the situation, and modest expectation that taxes will in fact go up.

Of course, there is also the program side to be considered. Here the fiscal situation may be complicated by the lack of easy "targets". Respondents were presented with a list of some ten program areas, and after they were reminded that the state "will have to choose how it spends money on various programs" and asked "compared to other areas -- whether each of the following should be a higher priority than it is now, a lower priority, or have about the same priority" for state spending. These did not ask directly about absolute level of spending as such, but are intended to give a sense of overall emphases.

Before examining the areas in detail, some general patterns should be noted. On only one area did respondents who favored a lower priority clearly outnumber those who wanted an increased priority. On two others, there was (modestly) more sentiment for a lower priority than a higher priority, but this was still clearly a minority position. That is, substantially more wanted either to keep the existing priority or raise it than wanted to lower the priority. On all the other areas, the net sentiment was to raise priority, and this was usually the single most common position. This suggests that ANY perceived major cuts will likely bother substantial numbers of people and thus decisionmakers have their work cut out for them.

The single most "popular" area was "helping pay for local schools". Overall, just under six in ten (57%) wanted to see this area given increased priority, while one in three (32%) would give it the same. Only one in ten (10%) would give it a relatively lower priority. All groups favored this area, but the degree of support declined some as one moved from Democrat to Republican, and as one moved up the age spectrum. Men were slightly less enthusiastic as a group than women. In every group, though, the balance was clearly for maintained or increased priority.

Next came "public higher education". Overall, half (52%) would accord this area higher priority. Another third (33%) would keep it where it is, and only one resident in eight (12%) would lower its priority. Gender and partisan patterns were similar, but rather more muted. When it comes to age, the clearest distinction is between those under thirty and those over forty-five, with the thirty to forty-four year olds in the middle. On balance, however, each group favored maintaining or increasing priority.

Two areas were broadly similar in overall profile and next on the priority ladder. They were fighting crime and protecting the environment. Each had about nine in ten wanting at least the present priority, as did the first two areas cited. But here, the sentiment was pretty evenly split between increasing and maintaining (46%-44% for fighting crime, 43%-46% for protecting the environment).

There are group differences however. Women give more priority to fighting crime than do men, the two are almost identical as groups when it comes to the environment. Partisan distinctions, on the other hand, are very small for fighting crime, but there is a clear decline for the priority of protecting the environment as one moves from Democrat to Republican. Age patterns are rather more murky.

Reducing the use of illegal drugs and welfare and care for the poor come next. For each, those wanting an increase of priority outnumber those who want a cut by about one fifth of the group (just under that for drugs, just over that for welfare. The distinction is those opposed to a priority lessening split evenly between wanting to keep things the same and hoping for an increase in combating drugs, while the single most common position when it comes to "welfare and care for the poor" is to keep things where they are now. When it comes to drugs, the biggest distinction is between the oldest group and others, with quite modest variation across the other categories. For welfare on the other hand, youngest respondents give the area the most emphasis, and there is a clear downward trend from Democrat to Republican. Men are less willing to emphasize this area as a group than are women.

On balance, there is rough net willingness to see things stay the same for "aid to cities and towns" and "roads and highways". For each, half the respondents would keep things as they are, although there is a slight NET desire for increase on local aid, and a slight NET desire for de-emphasis on roads (that is those favoring a change in one direction modestly outnumber those opting for change in the other).

There are almost no discernible distinctions among the demographic groups examined when it comes to the priority to be accorded to roads and highways. Little is going on either for age and only modestly at most for gender (with women more favorable) for local aid. This area is one where there are measured partisan differences, however. While all groups have a majority favoring keeping it where it is, on balance, Democrats modestly favor and increase, Independents a bit less so, and Republicans "net" would reduce it by about the same margin as Independent increase. Still, compared to other areas, these distinctions are quite modest.

Mass transit lacks a strong constituency. Overall, roughly equal numbers would keep it where it is in priority (40%) or reduce it (36%), but this last group is twice the size of the one which would increase its relative priority. Support declines modestly as one moves from Democrat to Republican, but only among Democrats and the youngest age group is the net opinion neutral or even (very) mildly positive (that is, in all other groups, at least as many want to

cut its priority as to increase it).

And then there is "spending money on prisons". Half of all respondents (51%) would give this a lower priority. Somewhat above one in three would keep it the same (38%), only one in twelve thinks this deserves a higher relative priority. Willingness to see a reduction in priority (which could mean a bigger than "proportional" cut, or a less than proportional increase) is evident across all groups examined. Differences among the groups, however, are quite muted.

The distinction between prisons and fighting crime is a noteworthy one. The purpose of prisons, of course, is to punish crime and deter others from engaging in it. But the public at large is willing to see prisons deemphasized even as it resists the idea of crime fighting taking a lower priority. This could be because of the emphasis on spending on prisons as such, which might be seen as excessive, or because of a perceived LACK of link between prisons and fighting crime. But it does demonstrate that public attitudes can be complex.

Overall, these questions suggest that the new Administration comes into office with a public favorably disposed to giving it a chance, but with its work cut out for it. There is doubt as to whether the "tough choices" really are necessary, a lack of "easy targets", and a sense that taxes may well go up, despite promises, and despite the fact that so many promises to the contrary were made. Clearly much will depend on the quality of political leadership and how well the case can be made for the ultimate decisions and their impact on the state fiscal situation.

Statewide Marginals and Percentages for Key Groups

What follows is the exact question wording for each of the items referred to in the release. All results shown are for the basic sample of state residents. The first column is the percentage of the entire sample giving each response. The second and third reports the percentages for men and women separately. The fourth, fifth, and sixth columns show self-described Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Columns seven through ten group respondents by age.

Q01. INTERVIEWER: (DO NOT ASK) Enter respondent's gender

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MALE	49%	100%	--%	43%	58%	55%	38%	52%	56%	44%
FEMALE	51	--	100	57	42	45	62	48	44	56

DOYLE01. Did you happen to vote in the election last November or did something come up that prevented you from voting?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
VOTED	76%	81%	71%	80%	75%	88%	59%	65%	86%	88%
DID NOT VOTE	22	16	28	19	21	11	38	33	12	11
INELIGIBLE (VOL.)	2	3	1	--	3	1	3	3	--	1
DON'T KNOW	*	--	1	1	--	--	--	--	1	--
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	1	--	--	--	1	-

DOYLE02. For whom did you vote for Governor? (PROMPT IF NECESSARY)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
DOYLE	47%	44%	51%	79%	49%	15%	51%	27%	55%	54%
MCCALLUM	30	33	26	10	16	69	17	44	27	28
THOMPSON	8	10	7	4	14	7	13	12	7	5
YOUNG	2	1	2	--	4	1	4	--	2	1
SOMEONE ELSE	1	1	2	*	--	1	--	--	3	1
DIDN'T VOTE FOR GOV.	*	1	*	--	2	--	3	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	2	1	3	2	3	1	4	3	*	3
REFUSED	9	10	9	4	13	6	7	14	7	8

DOYLE03. How do you feel about Doyle's victory in the gubernatorial election? Are you very pleased, somewhat pleased, somewhat disappointed, or very disappointed?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
VERY PLEASED	19%	18%	21%	39%	16%	5%	18%	9%	24%	26%
SOMEWHAT PLEASED	37	39	35	42	46	28	40	29	40	40
SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED	23	25	21	10	21	39	18	33	22	17
VERY DISAPPOINTED	5	5	5	2	3	13	5	7	4	6
DON'T KNOW	13	11	15	7	10	15	17	19	8	8
REFUSED	2	2	3	--	4	1	2	2	2	4

DOYLE04. What kind of job do you think Jim Doyle will do as Governor? Excellent, good, fair or poor?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	10%	11%	9%	17%	7%	5%	8%	7%	8%	18%
GOOD	44	44	44	55	49	41	47	33	50	47
FAIR	31	30	32	20	32	35	37	39	30	19
POOR	3	5	2	1	3	8	3	5	1	5
DON'T KNOW	9	9	9	6	7	10	4	13	9	9
REFUSED	2	2	3	1	3	1	2	4	2	2

DOYLE05. Do you think he will do a better or worse job than Scott McCallum did?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
BETTER	66%	68%	64%	87%	66%	43%	70%	49%	75%	67%
WORSE	12	13	10	2	12	27	12	20	6	11
ABOUT THE SAME (VOL.)	6	6	6	4	7	9	6	8	4	6
DON'T KNOW	14	12	16	6	12	20	10	20	13	12
REFUSED	3	2	4	1	4	1	2	3	3	5

DOYLE05A. And will Doyle do a better or worse job than Tommy Thompson did?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
BETTER	42%	41%	42%	68%	39%	21%	41%	26%	50%	49%
WORSE	34	41	27	13	31	60	37	47	29	25
ABOUT THE SAME (VOL.)	9	8	9	11	11	5	11	7	7	11
DON'T KNOW	13	8	18	6	16	15	11	18	10	13
REFUSED	2	2	3	2	3	--	--	2	4	2

DOYLE06. Do you think Doyle will be able to solve Wisconsin's budget problems, or don't you think so?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
CAN SOLVE	25%	27%	24%	36%	28%	15%	31%	19%	21%	35%
CAN'T SOLVE	54	55	53	47	49	66	46	65	56	43
HELP, NOT SOLVE(VOL)	5	6	5	5	4	7	4	2	9	5
DON'T KNOW	15	11	18	12	18	13	20	14	11	16
REFUSED	1	1	1	--	1	--	--	*	2	1

DOYLE07. Do you think your own state taxes next year will go up a lot, go up some, stay about the same, go down some, or go down a lot?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
GO UP A LOT	11%	9%	13%	10%	4%	15%	16%	17%	6%	7%
GO UP SOME	57	61	53	54	70	53	45	60	65	51
STAY ABOUT THE SAME	24	24	24	28	18	24	30	16	21	34
GO DOWN SOME	3	2	4	6	3	2	7	3	3	1
GO DOWN A LOT	1	--	2	--	1	1	--	2	1	--
DON'T KNOW	3	3	4	*	4	5	2	2	3	6
REFUSED	1	1	1	1	1	--	--	--	1	1

TAX01. Right now do you think the level of state taxes in Wisconsin is too high, too low, or just about right?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
TOO HIGH	71%	71%	71%	64%	74%	77%	46%	77%	79%	74%
TOO LOW	1	1	*	*	1	--	--	1	2	--
JUST ABOUT RIGHT	26	26	25	32	21	23	55	22	17	23
DEPENDS ON TAX (VOL.)	*	*	*	*	1	--	--	--	--	1
DON'T KNOW	1	*	2	2	1	1	--	1	1	2
REFUSED	1	1	1	1	1	--	--	--	2	--

TAX02. How about the level of state spending, is that too high, too low, or just about right?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
TOO HIGH	63%	67%	60%	56%	62%	74%	47%	65%	71%	61%
TOO LOW	3	4	3	4	5	*	6	2	5	1
JUST ABOUT RIGHT	22	22	23	27	23	18	39	20	15	23
DEPENDS ON PROG.(VOL.)	3	1	4	3	2	2	4	1	1	6
DON'T KNOW	8	5	11	11	8	6	5	12	6	9
REFUSED	1	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	2	-

TAX05. Overall, do you think business in Wisconsin pays more than its fair share of state taxes, less than its fair share, or about its fair share?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MORE THAN FAIR SHARE	19%	20%	18%	15%	13%	25%	10%	21%	17%	25%
LESS THAN FAIR SHARE	22	24	19	28	25	15	14	19	28	22
ABOUT FAIR SHARE	45	43	47	43	51	41	68	45	39	38
DON'T KNOW	14	12	16	14	10	19	8	16	16	15
REFUSED	*	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	--

TAX06. How about upper income people in Wisconsin, do they pay more than their fair share of state taxes, less than their fair share, or about their fair share?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MORE THAN FAIR SHARE	11%	15%	7%	6%	7%	24%	5%	14%	14%	7%
LESS THAN FAIR SHARE	44	36	52	59	41	22	53	43	45	38
ABOUT FAIR SHARE	33	37	29	27	38	42	36	35	27	39
DON'T KNOW	11	10	12	9	13	12	6	8	13	16
REFUSED	1	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	2	--

TAX07. How about people like you? (PROBE FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MORE THAN FAIR SHARE	43%	41%	45%	41%	40%	43%	31%	47%	48%	40%
LESS THAN FAIR SHARE	3	3	2	5	2	1	5	2	3	1
ABOUT FAIR SHARE	53	54	51	53	56	56	63	51	48	53
DON'T KNOW	2	1	2	*	1	*	1	*	*	5
REFUSED	1	1	--	1	1	--	--	--	1	1

BUDG02. In order to balance the state budget, do you think a choice will have to be made between serious service cuts and big increases in taxes, or is it possible to both maintain essential services and keep taxes down?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HAVE TO CHOOSE	41%	45%	37%	43%	41%	41%	25%	42%	46%	46%
DOESN'T HAVE TO CHOOSE	46	43	49	46	42	48	63	49	41	34
SOME OF EACH (VOL.)	4	5	2	6	2	2	--	4	5	5
DON'T KNOW	9	6	12	6	14	9	11	6	8	15
REFUSED	1	1	*	--	1	--	1	--	1	--

BUDG03. If there is a choice this year between raising taxes or cutting state programs, which would you prefer?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
RAISE TAXES	35%	31%	38%	52%	34%	16%	64%	33%	30%	22%
CUT PROGRAMS	51	56	45	36	51	72	29	49	58	60
SOME OF EACH (VOL.)	4	6	3	4	4	5	2	4	4	6
DON'T KNOW	8	6	11	9	7	6	3	12	5	12
REFUSED	2	2	3	--	4	*	2	2	4	1

BUDG04. And suppose it comes to cuts in a program you like or new taxes earmarked just for that program, which would you prefer?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
CUTS IN PROGRAM	40%	48%	33%	33%	39%	55%	22%	46%	47%	37%
EARMARKED TAXES	45	38	52	59	45	30	67	42	42	37
SOME OF EACH (VOL.)	2	2	3	1	2	3	--	2	1	7
CUTS IN OTHERS (VOL.)	*	*	*	--	1	*	1	--	*	1
DON'T KNOW	10	10	11	6	10	11	10	10	7	17
REFUSED	2	1	2	--	2	*	1	*	3	1

BUDG08. The state will have to choose how it spends money on various programs. Please tell me -- compared to other areas -- whether each of the following should be a higher priority than it is now, a lower priority, or have about the same priority? Welfare and care for the poor?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	37%	30%	43%	51%	30%	22%	48%	32%	37%	34%
LOWER PRIORITY	14	14	13	8	16	16	10	20	15	9
SAME PRIORITY	47	52	43	39	50	60	43	47	44	54
DON'T KNOW	2	2	1	2	3	2	--	2	2	3
REFUSED	1	1	*	*	1	1	--	--	2	1

BUDG09. Roads and highways? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	18%	17%	18%	12%	19%	14%	21%	20%	16%	15%
LOWER PRIORITY	26	28	24	27	28	28	24	24	31	22
SAME PRIORITY	55	53	57	60	52	56	55	54	52	62
DON'T KNOW	1	2	1	1	--	2	--	3	1	1
REFUSED	*	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	--

BUDG10. Mass transit? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	18%	20%	16%	27%	20%	11%	22%	16%	18%	18%
LOWER PRIORITY	36	39	34	27	33	48	19	40	42	37
SAME PRIORITY	40	35	45	43	39	36	55	38	35	38
DON'T KNOW	5	5	5	3	6	6	4	6	3	8
REFUSED	1	1	*	--	2	--	--	1	2	--

BUDG11. Aid to cities and towns? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	26%	26%	27%	34%	28%	15%	29%	28%	25%	26%
LOWER PRIORITY	17	20	15	14	15	26	14	21	16	18
SAME PRIORITY	52	50	54	47	53	56	55	47	55	52
DON'T KNOW	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	5	3	5
REFUSED	*	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	-

BUDG12. Public higher education? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	52%	49%	55%	61%	54%	41%	77%	53%	44%	45%
LOWER PRIORITY	12	12	12	11	10	17	5	16	12	12
SAME PRIORITY	33	35	31	28	32	40	16	29	41	41
DON'T KNOW	2	3	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	3
REFUSED	1	1	1	--	1	--	--	--	2	--

BUDG13. Spending money on prisons? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	8%	10%	7%	8%	6%	9%	8%	10%	7%	8%
LOWER PRIORITY	51	50	52	54	51	47	45	54	55	45
SAME PRIORITY	38	38	39	37	39	43	47	34	37	41
DON'T KNOW	2	2	3	1	3	1	--	2	1	6
REFUSED	*	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	--

BUDG14. Helping pay for local schools? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	57%	54%	60%	68%	56%	43%	77%	66%	50%	44%
LOWER PRIORITY	10	13	8	5	8	18	3	10	14	12
SAME PRIORITY	32	32	31	28	35	37	20	24	35	44
DON'T KNOW	1	1	--	--	*	1	--	1	1	1
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	--	*	--	--	--	1

BUDG15. Fighting crime? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	46%	39%	53%	49%	40%	47%	53%	50%	41%	44%
LOWER PRIORITY	8	9	6	10	10	2	11	5	12	3
SAME PRIORITY	44	49	39	41	47	48	36	43	45	49
DON'T KNOW	2	2	1	--	2	2	--	2	1	4
REFUSED	*	1	*	--	1	*	--	--	1	1

BUDG16. Reducing the use of illegal drugs? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	39%	35%	43%	40%	37%	40%	32%	35%	35%	56%
LOWER PRIORITY	22	26	18	21	26	20	25	26	24	11
SAME PRIORITY	37	36	38	37	35	39	43	37	37	31
DON'T KNOW	2	2	2	1	1	1	--	3	2	2
REFUSED	*	1	*	--	1	*	--	--	1	1

BUDG17. Protecting the environment? (Should that be a higher priority for state spending than it is now, a lower priority, or about the same?)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HIGHER PRIORITY	43%	42%	44%	60%	42%	29%	55%	37%	45%	38%
LOWER PRIORITY	10	11	10	9	6	17	5	16	7	11
SAME PRIORITY	46	45	47	30	50	53	40	46	46	50
DON'T KNOW	1	1	--	--	*	1	--	1	1	1
REFUSED	*	1	*	--	1	*	--	--	1	1

QD05. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
Democrat	30%	26%	34%	100%	--%	--%	34%	26%	35%	26%
Republican	26	29	23	--	--	100	19	28	23	32
Independent	24	29	20	--	100	--	22	24	25	26
Other	13	11	14	--	--	--	23	11	14	5
None	3	3	3	--	--	--	--	7	1	5
DON'T KNOW	2	*	3	--	--	--	1	4	*	1
REFUSED	3	1	4	--	--	--	2	2	2	5

QD11. In what year were you born? (ENTER FOUR-DIGIT YEAR) (Calculated and grouped as below)

		GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
	TOT	M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
18-29	18%	14%	21%	20%	16%	13%	100%	--%	--%	--%
30-44	26	28	25	22	25	28	--	100	--	--
45-59	32	37	28	38	33	29	--	--	100	--
60 and over	23	21	25	20	24	28	--	--	--	100
DK/REFUSED	2	1	2	1	2	2	--	--	--	--

* denotes less than .5%
-- denotes 0%

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

This BADGER POLL™ was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center as part of its ongoing program of research designed to benefit the research community and the people of Wisconsin, under the direction of G. Donald Ferree, Jr., Associate Director for Public Opinion Research of the Center. The media sponsors of the survey are the (Madison) Capital Times, and the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. The BADGER POLL™ is intended to be a "poll of record" for the state, investigating matters of concern to Wisconsinites including politics, culture, and their daily lives, adhering to the highest standards of polling methodology and rigorous independence.

A total of 514 randomly chosen state residents were interviewed for this survey by telephone between January 7 and 15th, inclusive. Telephone numbers were generated by computer in proportion to the number of adults living in each area of the state. Theoretically, results from this survey have a "margin of error" of a little over +/- 4%. This means that, had we asked every eligible resident in Wisconsin, exactly these questions at the time the survey was conducted, there is only a one in twenty chance that the answers would differ by more than that in either direction from what we report here. There could be differences because of changes in question wording, events occurring in the meantime, or any of the practical difficulties involved in taking a scientific survey. Results based on subgroups are subject to a larger "margin of error".

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