

Dignity at Work COALITION Wisconsin

Voter's Guide for Economic Justice 2016

As Election Day draws near, it becomes imperative that we educate ourselves on the urgent issues facing our state and question our candidates on where they stand and how they intend to address these issues. Please use this non-partisan voter guide as a resource to help you learn the issues and pose important questions to your candidates. This guide can be used at candidate forums, town hall meetings, and any other venues where candidates are available for questioning.

For more resources on voting in Wisconsin, go to <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>



Child Care

Child care both creates jobs in our state and is an essential support to working families who need all available wage earners to make ends meet. Yet working families are struggling to pay the rising cost of child care, which can cost annually as much as in-state college tuition. These working families include child care workers themselves, mainly women who are engaged in one of the poorest paid occupations in the nation (in Wisconsin averaging just around \$10/hour). Current national polling data indicate that 80% of the voting public, both Democrats and Republicans, believe that child care and early education should be a funding priority.

QUESTION: What role do you believe federal, state and local governments have in making early childcare accessible and affordable to working families?
(<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/>)



Paid Family and Medical Leave

Almost everyone eventually has to take time off of work in order to care for a new child, a sick family member, or for themselves if they become seriously ill. Most workers do not have access to **paid** family and medical leave at their work, and many of those workers who do have access to **unpaid** leave under the Family Medical Leave Act, cannot afford to take it. Several states have begun to address this issue proactively by creating a state family and medical leave insurance fund into which workers pay a very small amount of money in order to have access to paid family and medical leave. Similar legislation has been proposed in Wisconsin, which is called the Wisconsin Family Insurance Act.

QUESTION: What is your position on the Wisconsin Family Insurance Act?

Minimum Wage

Millions of workers struggle to make ends meet on minimum wage salaries. Someone working full-time, year round at the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour earns just \$14,500 – more than \$5,500 below the poverty line for a family

of 3. The federal minimum cash wage for tipped workers is \$2.13 per hour. Raising the minimum wage would boost earnings for millions of workers.

QUESTION: What is your stance on Wisconsin's minimum wage? Are you in favor of an increase? If so, how much of an increase would you like to see, and do you believe the rate should be indexed to the cost of inflation? If you are not in favor of a statewide increase, why not?

Private Sector Retirement Security

Wisconsin currently has a pension fund for public employees--the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS)--that is viewed as a national model because it is adequately funded, well managed, and has low overhead costs. Private sector employees do not have access to such a consumer-friendly system where they can pool their personal retirement resources. This is particularly important for women, who typically have fewer retirement savings than men and must stretch their savings over a longer lifespan. The Wisconsin Private Secure Retirement Act was introduced in the last legislative session, which would require the state to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of the state creating a participant-funded Wisconsin Private

Retirement Security Board for private sector workers that is modeled on the current WRS.

QUESTION: What is your position on the Wisconsin Private Security Act, which would provide private sector workers with a retirement system in which they can invest their savings that is similar to the one currently enjoyed by public sector workers?

(<http://www.asklearnvote.org/>)



Transportation Funding

The demand for accessible and affordable public transportation is greater than ever. The aging baby boomer population and the millennial generation both rely on public transportation. For baby boomers, public transportation is essential to maintaining an active lifestyle and accessing medical and other services. For millennials, it is a lifeline to jobs, services, and entertainment. But our roads and highways are crumbling, and 36% of our bus fleet is past its useful life and needs replacing, and our largest communities, Milwaukee and Madison, need to invest in high capacity transit to meet urgent equity and economic development needs. The Wisconsin Transportation Finance and Policy Commission's *Keep Wisconsin*

Moving report recommends restoring \$18.8 million dollars in transportation funding to the state budget.

QUESTION: What is your stance on increasing funding to recommended levels for Wisconsin's public transportation needs?

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Brokerage

Wisconsin, like many other states, uses a brokerage system to manage non-medical emergency transportation services (NEMT) for our most vulnerable residents. But the system today is breaking down. The current system of paying the broker according to the number of enrollees rather than the number of rides provides an incentive to minimize the number of rides provided. A fee-for-service model would change that dynamic and allow for greater access to services for our Medicaid patients.

QUESTION: What is your position on issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new brokerage firm when the current contract expires at the end of 2017, and changing the fee structure from per capita to fee-for-services?

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