

# THE WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO- ST. NORBERT COLLEGE SURVEY CENTER POLL

**EMBARRGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL OCTOBER 28, 2000**

## "TAXES CONTINUE TO BE CITED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM FACING WISCONSIN"

TOPIC: Most Important Problem  
 Release Date: October 28, 2000  
 Sample: 413 Likely Voters Statewide in Wisconsin

### MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN WISCONSIN

"What do you think is the most important problem facing the State of Wisconsin today?"

	<u>10/94</u>	<u>10/95</u>	<u>10/96</u>	<u>10/97</u>	<u>10/98</u>	<u>10/99</u>	<u>10/00</u>
Taxes	21	21	14	18	30	29	26
Education	5	7	12	11	20	13	14
Economy	1	1	5	1	3	5	9
Health Care	3	5	2	2	2	4	8
Environment	1	2	1	5	2	3	7
Welfare Issues	21	14	15	10	6	5	5
Farm Issues	1	2	1	2	1	3	4
Jobs/Unemployment	6	4	6	4	2	1	4
Crime	26	9	10	11	5	7	3
Drugs	1	6	6	4	2	2	1

Which Political Party in the State of Wisconsin, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you think would do the best job of handling the problem you just mentioned?

	<u>10/94</u>	<u>10/95</u>	<u>10/96</u>	<u>10/97</u>	<u>10/98</u>	<u>10/99</u>	<u>10/00</u>
Democrats	30	33	36	32	--	33	42
Republicans	35	35	42	31	--	33	34

Neither	11	18	6	17	--	17	8
Both	6	3	1	4	--	4	2
Not Sure	18	11	15	16	--	13	14

**GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH WISCONSIN**

"In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in Wisconsin at this time?"

	<u>10/94</u>	<u>10/95</u>	<u>10/96</u>	<u>10/97</u>	<u>10/98</u>	<u>10/99</u>	<u>10/00</u>
Satisfied	--	55	73	72	78	73	66
Dissatisfied	--	39	23	25	17	23	28
Not Sure	--	6	4	4	5	5	6

**PERSONAL FINANCIAL SITUATION**

"Would you say you are financially better off now than you were a year ago, or financially worse off now?"

	<u>10/94</u>	<u>10/95</u>	<u>10/96</u>	<u>10/97</u>	<u>10/98</u>	<u>10/99</u>	<u>10/00</u>
Better Off	38	36	47	47	45	55	57
Same	34	31	26	28	30	23	23
Worse Off	28	32	25	25	25	21	19
Not Sure	1	1	2	1	1	1	1

"Do you expect that at this time next year you will be financially better off than now or worse off than now?"

	<u>10/94</u>	<u>10/95</u>	<u>10/96</u>	<u>10/97</u>	<u>10/98</u>	<u>10/99</u>	<u>10/00</u>
Better Off	50	46	56	54	56	63	64
Same	31	21	19	25	21	15	20
Worse Off	15	26	15	14	17	20	9
Not Sure	5	8	9	7	6	1	7

**MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN THE NATION**

10/92 10/96 10/00

Health Care/ Prescription Drugs	4	4	16
Education	2	9	15
Moral Standards / Values	6	6	15
Foreign Policy / Military	--	--	13
Economy	27	8	11
Crime	2	9	8
Social Security	--	--	5
Taxes	2	6	4
Debt/Deficit	20	17	2
Drugs	2	13	2
Jobs/unemployment	22	2	1
Welfare System	2	2	1

Which Political Party in the Democrats or the Republicans, do you think would do the best job of handling the problem you just mentioned?

	<u>10/92</u>	<u>10/96</u>	<u>10/00</u>
Democrats	46	48	48
Republicans	28	34	34
Neither	13	7	9
Both	2	1	3
Not Sure	11	10	7

**SUMMARY**

Taxes continue to be viewed as the most important problem facing the state of Wisconsin according to the latest Wisconsin Public Radio- St. Norbert College Survey Center Poll released today. Just over a quarter (26%) of Wisconsin likely voters identified Taxes as the Most Important Problem, followed by Education (14%), the Economy (9%), Health Care (8%), Environment (7%), Welfare Issues (5%), farm issues (4%), Jobs/unemployment (4%), Crime (3%) and drugs (1%). The Democratic Party is identified as the party best able to deal with the problem cited by the likely voter respondents.

Overall satisfaction with how things are going in Wisconsin appears to have declined slightly in this most recent survey. Although two-thirds (66%) of the respondents say that they are satisfied with how things are going in this satisfaction level is down from 73% a year ago and 78% in October 1998. The data from 1999 was of a general population survey while the 1998 data is also collected from among likely voters.

While satisfaction overall is down slightly, optimism regarding personal financial situation appears to be up. Fifty-seven percent of likely voters say their personal financial situation is better now than one year ago compared to 19% who say personal financial situation is worse now than a year ago. When asked

about their economic future voters are the most optimistic they have ever been, with 64% saying they think they will be even better off one year from now. This is up from 56% who said "Better Off" in October 1998 and about the same as figure in October 1999 of 63%. Only 9% say they think they'll be worse off one year from now. This is the lowest level we have recorded saying they would be "Worse Off" one year from now. These figure show a tremendous amount of optimism regarding the economic conditions at this point in time.

When asked what they think is the Most Important Problem facing the nation at this time no issues dominate the concerns of the Wisconsin electorate. The top five issues include: health care/prescription drugs (16%), education (15%), moral standards/values (15%), foreign policy/military (13%) and the economy (11%). With nearly identical margins as in 1992 and 1996 the Wisconsin likely voters select the Democratic party as the party best able to handle the problem they cite.

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## **HOW THE WISCONSIN SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED**

The Wisconsin Survey is a statewide survey of Wisconsin residents conducted by the St. Norbert College Survey Center and Wisconsin Public Radio. The Wisconsin Survey has been conducted biannually since 1984. For this survey telephone interviews were conducted with XXX likely voters in the state of Wisconsin between October 18-24, 2000. The sample was a random digit dial sample selected in such a way to include both listed and unlisted phone numbers. Respondents at the household level were selected using the Trolldahl-Carter selection technique. Only those identified as likely voters were interviewed. Eight attempts were made on each telephone number to reach someone at each household. With this sample size we can be 95% sure that the sample percentages reported will not vary by more than  $\pm 5\%$  from the actual percentage in the population. The margin of error will be larger for smaller subgroups.

### **For Further Information contact:**

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