



**1. Top five issues preventing Wisconsinites from realizing the American Dream.**

- a. Affordable Healthcare
- b. Affordable Housing
- c. K-12 schools
- d. Childcare
- e. Inflation

**2. Why did you choose those issues?**

The entire list presents important obstacles to overcome to ensure that we can create the strongest possible future for Wisconsin, but the most acute challenges are the issues that are driving up costs for Wisconsin families. The end of the Obamacare subsidies has resulted in dramatic increases in premiums for people all over Wisconsin, driving up costs in every corner of our state. In addition, we have major challenges with lack of access – especially in rural areas – to go along with those increased costs.

Communities around the state see potential growth stifled and young families leaving because we lack entry level homes – Wisconsin needs an additional 70,000 homes that are within reach for young families and first-time buyers to allow us to keep pace with neighboring states. For the first time last year, in Wisconsin and nationally, the average age of a first-time home buyer grew to 40 years old – the ability to generate equity and wealth, and the strengths to communities from home ownership are being threatened all across Wisconsin.

Almost \$2 billion in Wisconsin productivity sits on the sidelines every year – mainly through women who are not in the workplace because they cannot access affordable and high quality care for their children. The state's failure to adequately address both funding and outcomes in the K-12 system has resulted in a system that forces local school districts to go to operating referenda year after year just to keep the lights on while we lost ground in the competition to prepare kids for the future workforce.

**3. What will be your top priorities for your first state budget to improve state government operations, protect taxpayers, and minimize government abuses?**

Having served as Secretary of Administration, I am intimately familiar with the decisions that go into the budget and how it reflects both our investment priorities and our values. We should always be seeking ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness of Wisconsin government. Wisconsin still needs to update and modernize state systems in areas like IT, licensing and other critical infrastructure, and we will find ways to continue to make investments that can enhance all areas of state operations. Just like every employer, investment in the state workforce and enhanced training will also improve overall operations. Finally, investment in prevention and evidenced based programs in mental health, public health and housing will be critical in improving delivery of services in an efficient and effective manner.



The best way to protect taxpayers is to reduce the total cost of living as a Wisconsin resident. The explosion of property taxes at the local level is clearly connected to the state's failure to adequately address K-12 education, and a focus on state aid as well as a change in the antiquated school funding model will help address the costs pushed down to local property tax payers. Continuation and expansion of the targeted tax cuts that Governor Tony Evers has offered, as well as reducing healthcare costs and increasing aid to Wisconsin residents seeking childcare will also protect taxpayers in our state.

Especially as we see the abuse of government power at the federal level, we need to focus on transparency at all levels of government and oversight of the spending of state funds. I am concerned about government overreach as well as protections for Wisconsin residents from corporations.

Overall, priorities in my first budget will outline investments that can provide the building blocks for long-term savings and stronger economic growth in Wisconsin.

**4. What specific policies will you enact to improve Wisconsin's K-12 education system for all and improve academic outcomes?**

The first way to improve outcomes in the K-12 system (as well as address workforce challenges throughout the state) is investing in early learning in Wisconsin. We have generally failed to invest state resources in the most important years for brain development (0 – 3) and we have an industry lurching from crisis to crisis. Smarter investments and an overhaul of early learning may be the most important thing we can do to create better outcomes in K-12.

It is also abundantly clear that the funding formula that was established more than 30 years ago is inadequate in both keeping down costs and providing better outcomes for kids. The 60 operational referenda in Wisconsin this spring, the lawsuit filed by school districts, parents and educators, the increased costs at the local level and the results that see us losing ground to other states are evidence of a system that needs to be viewed and operated differently.

Other states have demonstrated ways to create a system with students at the center of the funding equation, with every child starting with an investment and additional resources provided for special needs, significant poverty, English language learners and other realities in urban and rural school districts. Changing this system will require courage and openness from legislators and school leaders, but most agree that the current system has failed to address the modern challenges in Wisconsin schools.

Finally, accountability for any school that receives public funds is critically important to ensuring that outcomes will be better for the kids who we expect to represent the future Wisconsin workforce.



**5. What specific policies will you enact to lower the cost of living in Wisconsin and grow Wisconsin's economy?**

I've laid out specific plans to reduce health care costs and expand access in my Healthy Wisconsin Promise. To reduce the cost of living, we must address healthcare deserts, especially in rural Wisconsin. More than one third of Wisconsin counties no longer have a practicing OB/GYN, forcing women and families to drive long distances for pregnancy care, delivery and other basic needs. A focus on the healthcare workforce will better address our state's needs over the next two decades while also bringing down costs for our residents.

With regard to housing, we will institute specific policies through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) to provide opportunities for first-time home buyers to purchase their first homes and help long-term owners who are stuck in their existing homes transition into housing that is more reflective of their current lifestyle. We will also utilize state resources to ensure those seeking entry level homes have the resources they need to get their start through home-buyer counseling. Because this is also a supply challenge, we will deploy state resources and partner with local communities to provide Wisconsin builders with a pathway to providing the entry level housing that is desperately needed in communities all over the state.

Local property taxes represent a significant cost of living challenge to many Wisconsin residents. Addressing K-12 funding and the state shared revenue program will have a material impact on local property taxes to ensure Wisconsin residents can afford to stay in their homes.

These policies will reduce the overall cost of living, and they are also the bedrock of Wisconsin communities. Housing, healthcare, and education are the basis for strong, secure and healthy neighborhoods and communities, and we will grow and flourish as a state when we make progress on these issues.

**6. Name two (either in office or out) politicians that you admire and would model yourself after as governor. Why?**

Option 1: Tammy Baldwin is someone who has focused on being present and committed in rural Wisconsin and has managed to consistently lift up parts of Wisconsin whose residents have felt like the state has left them behind. She stands on principle, but she is also willing to work with anyone who has good ideas that will enhance the lives of Wisconsin residents.

Option 2: Our late Senator Herb Kohl was consistently able to stand above the fray of partisan politics and instead focus on Wisconsin values. His integrity in both his government service, but also as a Wisconsin business owner and owner of the Milwaukee Bucks, was unquestioned. Many would call Senator Kohl a statesman, and we need many more who can reflect passionate views but a pragmatic approach if we are going to make progress for Wisconsin families.



**7. Name 2 people (dead or alive) you would want to have dinner with. Why?**

I would want to spend an evening at the dinner table with John and Robert Kennedy. These brothers lived through a period of major tumult in America and rose above that to unite people in new and exciting ways. They ushered in a new era of optimism and service above self in the United States that is needed today more than ever. They stared down adversaries, worked to promote American civil rights and spurred a generation to believe that we all have something to contribute to a stronger and better America. Both individually, but especially as partners, they changed our nation dramatically, and I believe in the present day we have lost much of the spirit of service and commitment to change that benefits everyone rather than a select few that they represented. They surrounded themselves with smart and talented leaders and welcomed difference of opinion to get to a stronger and better decision, and we need that as opposed to the arrogance and ignorance that we see far too often, especially at the federal level

**8. Considering Wisconsin as a place to live, work, and play, what is it truly good at? What makes it unique compared to other states?**

Wisconsin businesses, farmers and people are still good at production and productivity – we are still good at making things. Manufacturing, farming, innovation that results from our higher education system are all still hallmarks of our state. We have an abundance of natural resources – lakes, rivers, forests and prairie – that allow for residents to have an almost spiritual connection to the land. And most of us take seriously our responsibility to protect those resources for future generations.

Unfortunately, we have become like other states and the nation by making public policy a “zero sum” game where inevitably one side must lose for the other to gain. Elections and governing are viewed as bloodsport rather than a passionate and spirited defense and disagreement over ideas that is all in the spirit of creating better lives for residents. We can get back to delivering a unique brand of governing by treating one another with respect and forging ahead based on ideas and ideals, not simply political labels. I want to resurrect that Wisconsin Way as governor.

**9. What is your favorite Wisconsin Supper Club?**

This is a trick question. When I launched my campaign and prepared to make my way around the state, my colleagues gave me a t-shirt with a list of Wisconsin supper clubs to visit all over Wisconsin, and I am slowly making my way through that list. Any one of the many places where I can enjoy a great meal and a brandy old fashioned will become my favorite for that evening, but there will always be more to explore in Wisconsin.

**10. What is something - or someone - that you respect from the opposite political party? Why?**

Utah Governor Spencer Cox launched the “Disagree Better” initiative during his time as the Chair of the National Governor’s Association in 2023. This bipartisan effort encourages healthier conflict by engaging in service projects, public debates, and promoting respectful



disagreement rather than contempt. As I recall, the campaign around this initiative included public service announcements, specific projects and just overall efforts to tone down the rhetoric that allows debate to devolve into hatred too often and too easily in America. Both the individual and this effort deserve my respect and appreciation, and I would seek to further these efforts as governor of Wisconsin.