

## Commentary on Bills Included in the 2023-2024 Legislator Scorecard

Bill #	Title or Topic of Bill	Vote Record (Ayes and Nays)	Commentary (Opening text is often taken from analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau.)
<a href="#">AJR 112</a>	Constitutional amendment limiting governor’s veto power.	Assembly: 64-34  Senate: 22-10  Passed.  (Proposed constitutional amendments do not require governor’s approval. Voters must approve the change by majority vote in a referendum.)	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Aye</b></p> <p>This proposed constitutional amendment, proposed to the 2023 legislature on first consideration, amends the Wisconsin Constitution to restrict the governor, in exercising his or her partial veto power over an appropriation bill, from creating or increasing or authorizing the creation or increase of any tax or fee.</p> <p>WCC supports this constitutional amendment because the current governor has vetoed more legislation than any previous governor, including repeated efforts by the legislature to provide relief to Wisconsin’s taxpayers.<sup>1</sup> While conservatives approach proposals to amend the U.S. Constitution with great caution, the Wisconsin State Constitution is a different matter: Voters have amended it 150 times in the state’s history, including 11 times since 2000.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>A proposed constitutional amendment requires adoption by two successive legislatures, and ratification by the people, before it can become effective. This amendment, if approved by both chambers of the legislature a second time in 2025, will appear on the ballot in 2025.</p>
<a href="#">SJR 78</a> <a href="#">AJR 77</a>	Constitutional amendment banning Zuckerbucks in Wisconsin elections.	Assembly: 60-35  Senate: 21-10  Passed.  (Proposed constitutional amendments do not require governor’s approval. Voters approved this amendment in an	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Aye</b></p> <p>This proposed constitutional amendment prohibits election officials from using private funds to administer public elections. It addresses widespread concern that millions of dollars from outside the state (“Zuckerbucks”) were used to influence the administration of the 2020 election in ways that favored Democrat candidates over Republicans.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>This was the second time the proposed amendment passed both houses of the legislature, so it appeared on the Spring 2024 ballot and was approved by voters. This was one of four constitutional amendments addressing election integrity proposed by Republicans as a way of circumventing the governor’s veto power.</p> <p>These amendments are probably the Republicans’ greatest accomplishment in the 2023-24 legislative session. Governor Evers has vetoed every election reform bill that has reached his desk, refusing to</p>

Bill #	Title or Topic of Bill	Vote Record (Ayes and Nays)	Commentary (Opening text is often taken from analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau.)
		April 2024 referendum.)	address known avenues for election fraud. Similarly, Wisconsin Elections Commission Administrator Meagan Wolfe has repeatedly failed to uphold existing election laws and has given false instructions to election clerks. A constitutional amendment is the only way to get past Democrat obstructionism on this important matter.
<a href="#">SB 488</a>	Adopt Gov. Evers' legislative redistricting map.	Assembly: 63-33  Senate: 18-14  Passed and enacted.	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Nay.</b></p> <p>This bill adopted legislative redistricting maps that were identical to what Gov. Evers submitted to the state Supreme Court as part of an ongoing redistricting lawsuit. Those maps are blatantly partisan, as demonstrated in testimony by experts and plain-to-see gerrymandering intended to favor Democrat candidates.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>According to a PBS report, Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (R) "said Republicans decided to support the governor's maps because 'the writing was on the wall' in the Supreme Court redistricting case, arguing the court's liberal majority hadn't taken GOP arguments in the case seriously. 'Given the circumstance, the Legislature is faced with two choices,' LeMahieu said. "Either pass the governor's maps as is or allow the liberal majority of the Wisconsin Supreme Court to gerrymander the state at the very last minute without public input."<sup>5</sup></p> <p>WCC believes Republicans should have taken the fight to the Wisconsin Supreme Court and then to the U.S. Supreme Court instead of surrendering preemptively. By allowing the new maps to take effect immediately, legislators and the governor effectively disenfranchised millions of voters. Blame can be placed on Democrat partisanship, including in the state Supreme Court, but shame goes to Republicans for not fighting harder for their constituents.</p>
<a href="#">AB 1020</a>	Reduce individual income tax rate from 5.3% to 4.4%.	Assembly: 62-34  Senate: 22-10  Passed and vetoed.	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Aye</b></p> <p>This is one of four Republican tax cut bills that would have reduced taxes, in total, by about \$3.2 billion a year. This bill would have reduced the individual income tax rate from the current 5.3% to 4.4%, saving taxpayers \$658 million in 2024-25 and \$472 million every year thereafter. According to estimates by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the average tax savings per taxpayer in Wisconsin would have been \$781 in 2024.</p> <p>WCC supports this bill and the other tax cuts proposed by Republicans because taxes in Wisconsin are high relative to other states; damaging to economic growth, individual freedom, and prosperity in Wisconsin; and unnecessary to support legitimate state spending.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>According to the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB-WI), "Representative Mark Born (Beaver Dam), Assembly Chair of the Joint Committee on Finance, said, 'We over collected taxes and we</p>

Bill #	Title or Topic of Bill	Vote Record (Ayes and Nays)	Commentary (Opening text is often taken from analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau.)
			<p>should give them back to those who overpaid.’ Senator Howard Marklein (Spring Green), Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Finance, said, ‘We have nearly \$4 billion sitting in surplus. Our middle class tax cut answers the Governor’s call. This is good for families, individuals, workers, retirees, and everyone in between.’”<sup>7</sup> We agree.</p>
<a href="#">AB 141</a>	Prevent product bans in the name of the leftist climate agenda.	<p>Assembly: 62-35</p> <p>Senate: 22-11</p> <p>Passed and vetoed.</p>	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Aye</b></p> <p>This bill provides that no state agency and no local governmental unit may restrict the use or sale of a device based on the energy source that is used to power the device or that is consumed by the device. Such proposals are often advanced in the name of reducing “carbon emissions” which, it is alleged, might have some negative effect on the weather (at some time in the distant future).</p> <p>WCC opposes such bans on several grounds. First, we echo the concerns expressed by Rep. Ellen Schutt in testimony on April 11, 2023: “These bans infringe on individual freedom and choice, on distributors selling products to the consumer, and on manufacturers who produce vehicles and other gas-powered products. The responsibility should be on people, if they so believe, to educate and convince others to switch from their gas powered machines to electric. The government should not be forcing individuals to buy certain products, eliminating competition, and destroying the free market.”<sup>8</sup></p> <p>Second, we question the science, economics, and ideological agendas that form the basis for such misguided attempts to change the weather. Greenhouse gas emissions from human sources are trivial compared to natural sources; the effect of such gases on the global climate is now understood to be too small to measure against natural variability; and the cost of attempting to affect the weather by reducing the use of fossil fuels is understood to be astronomical, vastly beyond the harms they may actually create and the cost of alternative means of protecting humanity and the natural world from climate change.<sup>9</sup></p>
<a href="#">AB 438</a>	Subsidy to Milwaukee Brewers.	<p>Assembly: 72-26</p> <p>Senate: 26-7</p> <p>Passed and enacted.</p>	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Nay</b></p> <p>This bill committed state taxpayers to giving the Milwaukee Brewers MLB franchise some \$500 million (estimates vary) to renovate its Milwaukee stadium. Supporters of the subsidy claim, among other things, that the stadium is more than twenty years old and in need of constant renovations; the local sales tax has expired, leaving revenue sources for the maintenance and improvement of the stadium short of what is needed; and having a professional baseball team “provides profound economic benefits to Milwaukee, the surrounding communities and the entire state.”<sup>10</sup></p> <p>Members of the WCC enjoy baseball as much as anyone else, but we oppose subsidizing the Milwaukee Brewers for the same reasons we oppose subsidizing any other private business or industry: It is not the state’s duty or within its legitimate powers to take money from taxpayers and give it to a favored private</p>

Bill #	Title or Topic of Bill	Vote Record (Ayes and Nays)	Commentary (Opening text is often taken from analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau.)
			<p>interest, <i>period</i>. Government exists to protect rights, in particular private property rights, and to ensure the safety of its citizens. Subsidizing sports teams does neither. Nor does this activity appear anywhere in the Wisconsin State Constitution. <i>Of course it does not.</i></p> <p>Sports franchises and their stadiums do not, in fact, produce “profound economic benefits.” Their economic impacts have been closely studied by economists for years.<sup>11</sup> Much of the money they raise through sales of tickets and other products is simply diverted from other forms of entertainment, e.g. restaurants, bars, and countless other small businesses that are forced to subsidize their competitor. Sports stadiums are notoriously bad at attracting other businesses to locate in their vicinity, and most of the businesses they do attract hire mostly minimum-wage workers. Most of the revenue the franchises collect is sent out of the community when billionaire owners and millionaire players put their earnings in out-of-state banks and investment firms.<sup>12</sup></p> <p>Wisconsin legislators and some taxpayers may be misled by the apparent success of the Green Bay Packers in generating economic activity near the stadium. But the Packers are <i>the least subsidized professional football franchise in the U.S.</i><sup>13</sup> Because the Packers are owned by their fans, the franchise cannot threaten to relocate. This in turn explains why the Packers are eager to reinvest in the community. Milwaukee cannot repeat the Green Bay success story by lavishing subsidies on the Brewers.</p> <p>This subsidy was a bad deal for taxpayers and a colossal waste of money.</p>
<a href="#">SB 330</a>	Increase funding for Wisconsin’s school choice programs.	<p>Assembly: 62-32 and paired 2</p> <p>Senate: 24-9</p> <p>Passed and enacted.</p>	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Aye</b></p> <p>This bill increases the per-pupil payments in parental choice programs and the Special Needs Scholarship program and the per-pupil payments made to independent charter schools and increases the revenue ceiling for school districts. It raises the per-pupil amount of money provided to parents under Wisconsin’s school choice program from \$8,300 to \$9,499.</p> <p>The increase was popular with Wisconsin’s charter and voucher schools and their defenders, but it came at a steep price: Republicans agreed to increase state funding of <i>government</i> K-12 schools by a record \$1 billion despite falling enrollment and declining student achievement.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, WCC scores this bill as a victory for school choice and therefore for conservatives.</p> <p>School choice simply means <i>the money follows the child</i>. If a child attends a private school, then the tax dollars that would have gone to a public school would instead follow the child to the private school selected by his or her parents. School choice means parents (and their children) are not punished for choosing the schools they think are best. It also means government schools can’t expect to continue to receive funding even when they fail to deliver good results.</p>

Bill #	Title or Topic of Bill	Vote Record (Ayes and Nays)	Commentary (Opening text is often taken from analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau.)
			<p>We support school choice programs for many reasons. Government schools in Wisconsin have done a poor job by many measures: student academic achievement, cost-effectiveness, teaching civics and American history, being responsive to parental concerns involving values and, most recently, the teaching of sexuality.<sup>15</sup> School choice breaks the “public school monopoly” over public funding by allowing private and religious schools to compete for students. Extensive research shows choice and competition in education produce superior academic achievement levels and higher levels of parental satisfaction. School choice also saves taxpayers’ dollars.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>Wisconsin was a pioneer in expanding school choice back when Democratic State Representative Polly Williams partnered with Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson to pass the nation’s first school choice program for low-income families in Milwaukee. Since then the program has expanded to enroll more than 29,000 students.<sup>17</sup> The WCC supports further expansions of the choice programs until every child in Wisconsin can attend the school his or her parent prefers.</p>
<a href="#">AB 377</a>	Prohibit male pupils from participating in K-12 girls sports.	Assembly: 63-35  Senate: 21-11  Passed and vetoed.	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Aye</b></p> <p>This bill would define a student’s sex as the sex determined at birth by a physician and reflected on the birth certificate. The bill requires an educational institution to designate the sex of students allowed to participate on an athletic team or sport. The institution must then prohibit a male pupil from participating on an athletic team or in an athletic sport designated for females. The bill further requires the educational institution to notify pupils and parents if it intends to change a designation for a team or sport.</p> <p>After puberty begins, boys have major advantages over girls in strength, speed, and size, even boys who take hormonal treatments.<sup>18</sup> Allowing boys who claim they are “really” girls to compete with biological girls in sports where strength, speed, and size matter is unfair to the girls, who have little chance of winning in such contests, and can be physically dangerous for them.<sup>19</sup></p> <p>Some K-12 school administrators believe or just assert that recent rules issued by the Biden Administration require that they allow biological boys to participate in girls sports. That interpretation is incorrect. Had Gov. Evers not vetoed this bill, parents and administrators would have a clear policy to point to when acting to protect girls.</p>
<a href="#">AB 465</a>	Prohibit gender transition surgeries on minors.	Assembly: 63-45  Senate: 22-10  Passed and vetoed.	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Aye</b></p> <p>This bill would prohibit health care providers from engaging in, causing the engagement in, or making referrals for, certain medical intervention practices upon an individual under 18 years of age if done for the purpose of changing the minor’s body to correspond to a sex that is discordant with the minor’s biological sex.</p>

Bill #	Title or Topic of Bill	Vote Record (Ayes and Nays)	Commentary (Opening text is often taken from analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau.)
			<p>Exceptions are made for health care providers providing a service 1) in accordance with a good faith medical decision of a parent or guardian of a minor born with a medically verifiable genetic disorder of sex development; 2) the treatment of any infection, injury, disease, or disorder that has been caused by or exacerbated by the performance of a gender transition medical procedure, whether or not that procedure was performed in accordance with state and federal law; or 3) any procedure undertaken because the minor suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness that would, as certified by a physician, place the minor in imminent danger of death or impairment of a major bodily function unless surgery is performed.</p> <p>Persons found guilty of violating this law would have their license or certificate revoked.</p> <p>WCC supports this bill because there is credible evidence that the mutilation of children’s genitals and the administration of dangerous drugs to block the onset of puberty and induce other physiological changes are causing irreversible and serious, even deadly, harms to children.<sup>20</sup> Children are not able to provide informed consent to such procedures because they lack the maturity and intelligence to make such life-altering decisions. Parents who make such decisions are neglecting their duties and succumbing to a dangerous social contagion that will lead to their children’s life-long suffering, infertility, depression, and even death.</p> <p>The LGBTQ+ movement is disturbing for what it means to the health and happiness of millions of adults,<sup>21</sup> but one can argue that adults are capable of making such choices. Children are not. This bill is one way to protect them from poor choices that lead to a lifetime of suffering and regret.</p>
<a href="#">SB 894</a>	\$7.5 million subsidy to BioForward, Inc.	<p>Assembly: 96-0</p> <p>Senate: 31-1</p> <p>Passed and enacted.</p>	<p><b>Wisconsin Conservative Coalition position: Nay</b></p> <p>This bill authorized the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to provide \$7.5 million to BioForward, Inc., in order to qualify for a federal grant designating the state as a “regional technology and innovation hub” under 15 USC 3722a. The funds are to be used for a variety of research and development activities relating to image-guided therapies and theranostics, construction of expanded shared lab space and lab-related programming and support for the expansion of Forward BIOLABS, Inc., and more.</p> <p>This bill is categorized under “social issues” rather than “economy” because businesses operating under the umbrella of BioForward use fetal tissue and organs for commercial purposes. They lobby to keep abortion legal long enough (15 weeks) for those tissues and organs to have maximum profitability.</p> <p>In 2014/2015, a bill was introduced by Sen. Andre Jacque that would have banned the sale of aborted baby body parts in Wisconsin for research. This bill was killed in 2015 in part due to lobbying by</p>

Bill #	Title or Topic of Bill	Vote Record (Ayes and Nays)	Commentary (Opening text is often taken from analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau.)
			<p>BioForward, Inc. which claimed it would harm the biotech industry in Wisconsin. People who oppose abortion should not be forced to subsidize the lobbying efforts of private businesses that profit from the death of preborn babies.</p> <p>WCC would also oppose this bill for the same reason it opposes subsidies to the Milwaukee Brewers MLB franchise: it is not the state's business to use taxpayers' dollars to subsidize private businesses, <i>period</i>. The state has no special expertise in choosing winners. It has no right to redistribute wealth, which is exactly the intended outcome of this transaction.</p> <p>On its website, BioForward, Inc. describes itself as "the collective marketing voice" of the state's "biohealth" industry, touting its members' "unique and diverse capabilities and earning recognition as a national and international leader. BioForward also helps develop a sense of pride around the region and industry that ripples throughout the State and beyond."<sup>22</sup> This is what taxpayers are being asked to pay for. If the "biohealth" industry thinks it has a strong case to make, it should be making it to private entities (e.g., banks, foundations, and investors) and not to the state government.</p>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mark Lisher, "Barely one bill in 10 becomes law in Madison," Badger Institute, April 11, 2024. <https://www.badgerinstitute.org/barely-one-bill-in-10-becomes-law-in-madison/>.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Kertscher, "Wisconsin constitutional amendments seek more power for Legislature," Wisconsin Watch, June 24, 2024. <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2024/06/wisconsin-republican-constitutional-amendments-election-ballot-legislature-overs/>.

<sup>3</sup> Jessica McBride & Jim Piwowarczyk, "Gableman Report: 8 Election 'Unlawful Conduct and Irregularities' He Found," Wisconsin Right Now, March 1, 2022. <https://www.wisconsinrightnow.com/gableman-report/>.

<sup>4</sup> "WILL Highlights Inconsistencies with Court's Political Consultants and Lays Out Potential Due Process Violation in New Redistricting Filing," Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, February 2024. <https://will-law.org/will-highlights-inconsistencies-with-courts-political-consultants-and-lays-out-potential-due-process-violation-in-new-redistricting-filing/>.

<sup>5</sup> Rich Kremer and Shawn Johnson, "Republicans pass Evers' legislative maps as redistricting saga nears possible finish line," NPR, February 13, 2024. <https://www.wpr.org/news/senate-assembly-republicans-pass-evers-maps-redistricting>.

<sup>6</sup> Wisconsin ranks 32 in the country for state and local tax burden as a percentage of state income, with 1 being the lowest tax burden and 50 being the highest tax burden. See Table 2 in *Facts & Figures: How Does Your State Compare? 2024* (Washington, DC: Tax Foundation, 2024). <https://taxfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/FF24-v3.pdf>.

---

<sup>7</sup> NFIB – Wisconsin, “Lawmakers Introduce Another Tax Reduction Plan,” January 30, 2024. <https://www.nfib.com/content/news/tax-reform/lawmakers-introduce-another-tax-reduction-plan/>.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen Schutt, Testimony on Assembly Bills 141 and 142, April 11, 2023. [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/hearing\\_testimony\\_and\\_materials/2023/ab141/ab0141\\_2023\\_04\\_11.pdf](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/hearing_testimony_and_materials/2023/ab141/ab0141_2023_04_11.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC), *Climate Change Reconsidered II: Fossil Fuels* (Arlington Heights, IL: The Heartland Institute, March 2019). <http://climatechangereconsidered.org/climate-change-reconsidered-ii-fossil-fuels/>.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Brooks, Hearing Testimony on Assembly Bill 438, October 25, 2023. [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/hearing\\_testimony\\_and\\_materials/2023/ab438/ab0438\\_2023\\_10\\_25.pdf](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/hearing_testimony_and_materials/2023/ab438/ab0438_2023_10_25.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Clark Merrefield, “Public funding for sports stadiums: A primer and research roundup,” The Journalist’s Resource, April 10, 2024. <https://journalistsresource.org/economics/sports-stadium-public-financing/>.

<sup>12</sup> John Charles Bradbury, Dennis Coates, and Brad R. Humphreys, “Public policy toward professional sports stadiums: A review,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, September 28, 2023. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pam.22534>.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Bast, “Sports Stadium Madness: Is Fan Ownership the Answer?” The Heartland Institute, February 27, 2012. <https://heartland.org/publications/sports-stadium-madness-is-fan-ownership-the-answer/>.

<sup>14</sup> “The 2023 State Of Education Address Fails To Address Education In The State,” by MacIver Staff, MacIver Institute, September 29, 2023. <https://www.maciverinstitute.com/2023/09/the-2023-state-of-education-address-fails-to-address-education-in-the-state/>.

<sup>15</sup> Abbi Debelack, “Many Students In Wisconsin Are Failing While 95% Of School Districts Receive Passing Grade According To DPI,” Badger Institute, November 18, 2021. <https://www.maciverinstitute.com/2021/11/many-students-in-wisconsin-are-failing-while-95-of-school-districts-receive-passing-grade-according-to-dpi/>. See also: Alex Newman, *Indoctrinating Our Children to Death* (Pinecrest, FL: Liberty Sentinel Press, 2024).

<sup>16</sup> Martin Leuken, “The 123s of School Choice: 2024 Edition,” EdChoice, June 27, 2024. <https://www.edchoice.org/engage/the-123s-of-school-choice-2024-edition/>. See also Herbert J. Walberg, *School Choice: The Findings* (Washington, DC: The Cato Institute, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Susan Mitchell, “How the Milwaukee School Choice Program Inspired a National Movement,” School Choice Wisconsin, January 24, 2022. <https://schoolchoicewi.org/how-the-milwaukee-school-choice-program-inspired-a-national-movement/>.

<sup>18</sup> Bianca Stanescu, “Transgender athletes don’t belong in girls’ sports. Let my daughter compete fairly,” *USA Today*, June 19, 2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/06/19/transgender-athletes-robbing-girls-chance-win-sports-column/4856486002/>.

<sup>19</sup> “Boys versus Women: Male High School Athletes versus Women Olympians.” <https://boysvswomen.com/#/>. Last visited on June 30, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Jared Ecker, “Rand Paul Is Right: Transgender Interventions for Kids Can Include ‘Genital Mutilation’,” The Daily Signal, February 26, 2021. <https://www.heritage.org/gender/commentary/rand-paul-right-transgender-interventions-kids-can-include-genital-mutilation>. See also: Joy Pullmann, “*Detrans* Helps Transgender Cult Survivors Tell Horrifying Truths All Media Work to Hide,” The Federalist, June 14, 2024. <https://thefederalist.com/2024/06/14/detrans-helps-transgender-cult-survivors-tell-horrifying-truths-all-media-work-to-hide/>.



---

<sup>21</sup> Peter Sprigg, “Homosexual Parent Study: Summary of Findings,” Family Research Council, n.d. <https://www.frc.org/issuebrief/homosexual-parent-study-summary-of-findings>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bioforward.org/>. Last visited on June 30, 2024.