EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
Wisconsin Employers Cite Worker Shortage as Top Public Policy Concern

A new survey of Wisconsin businesses found that nearly 80 percent of employers support a taxpayer-funded talent attraction campaign amidst the persistent and wide-spread workforce shortage. According to the Wisconsin Employer Survey, 70 percent of Wisconsin businesses cite the labor shortage and lack of qualified applicants as the top public policy issue facing the state.

In addition to creating a talent attraction campaign, businesses are looking to invest in retention efforts in Wisconsin’s K-12 system, with 70 percent of employers in favor of requiring career counselors in high schools. The survey also revealed that nine in 10 businesses support increased K-12 education funding specifically aimed at expanding STEM, industrial arts and technical training programming; while nearly all employers responded in support of expanding Wisconsin’s Youth & Registered Apprenticeships Program.

“Wisconsin is in desperate need of policy solutions to address the persistent and wide-spread workforce shortage,” said WMC President & CEO Kurt R. Bauer. “We need policymakers to work with the business community to invest in a talent attraction campaign and improve our retention efforts so that we can highlight all of the family-supporting career opportunities that exist within the state.”

While the results of the survey highlighted challenges the business community faces in Wisconsin, it also exposed employers’ overwhelming disapproval of federal policies that are negatively impacting the economy.

Eight in 10 businesses oppose the Biden Administration’s plan to extend the COVID-19-era Child Tax Credit and 84 percent of employers said they do not support President Biden’s Build Back Better Plan. In addition, nearly 90 percent of businesses surveyed oppose President Biden’s policies that have reduced domestic energy production like cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline and rescinding permits to drill on federal land.

“Businesses have been through enough challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic without the Biden Administration creating additional obstacles,” added Bauer. “Unfortunately, President Biden’s policies will just continue to drive up inflation, keep workers on the sidelines and ultimately hurt our economy.”

About the Wisconsin Employer Survey

The Wisconsin Employer Survey is conducted twice a year by WMC. The assessment provides a snapshot of where Wisconsin’s employers stand on a number of important issues and outlines their economic outlook for both Wisconsin and the United States. For the Winter 2022 edition, WMC surveyed 265 employers that make up a representative sample of its membership. Businesses of all sizes, industries and geographic locations in Wisconsin participated. The survey will be released in three separate reports on topics including; the economy; supply chain and inflation; and state and federal public policies.
**What is the top public policy issue facing Wisconsin?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LABOR SHORTAGE/LACK OF QUALIFIED APPLICANTS</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH CARE COSTS</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 REGULATIONS</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH TAXES</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCESSIVE REGULATION</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION QUALITY</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFFORDABLE ENERGY</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAWSUITS/LEGAL CLIMATE</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

**What is the one thing state government can do to help your business?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAKE HEALTH CARE MORE AFFORDABLE</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDUCE / REFORM REGULATIONS</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDUCE TAXES</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION REFORM</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDUCE SPENDING</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TORT / LEGAL REFORM</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you support or oppose a taxpayer-funded talent attraction campaign aimed at drawing more people into Wisconsin and filling available jobs?

78% SUPPORT
12% OPPOSE

STRONGLY SUPPORT 39%
SOMewhat SUPPORT 39%
STRONGLY OPPOSE 4%
SOMewhat OPPOSE 8%
UNSURE 9%

Do you support or oppose streamlining occupational licensing regulations to reduce barriers to entry for workers?

STRONGLY SUPPORT 40%
SOMewhat SUPPORT 42%
STRONGLY OPPOSE 2%
SOMewhat OPPOSE 6%
UNSURE 11%
Do you support or oppose allowing **high school students** to have **curriculum flexibility** to let them take courses that best match their career interests?

- **Strongly Support**: 69%
- **Somewhat Support**: 26%
- **Strongly Oppose**: 1%
- **Somewhat Oppose**: 2%
- **Unsure**: 2%

95% Support 3% Oppose

Do you support or oppose **requiring school districts** to hire **career counselors** in addition to guidance counselors?

- **Strongly Support**: 31%
- **Somewhat Support**: 39%
- **Strongly Oppose**: 5%
- **Somewhat Oppose**: 10%
- **Unsure**: 16%

70% Support 15% Oppose
Do you support or oppose increased K-12 education funding specifically aimed at expanding STEM, industrial arts and technical programming?

- **Support:** 91%
- **Oppose:** 5%
- **Strongly Support:** 57%
- **Somewhat Support:** 34%
- **Strongly Oppose:** 2%
- **Somewhat Oppose:** 3%
- **Unsure:** 4%

Do you support or oppose expanding Wisconsin’s Youth & Registered Apprenticeship program to include more industries and career paths?

- **Support:** 98%
- **Oppose:** 1%
- **Strongly Support:** 71%
- **Somewhat Support:** 27%
- **Strongly Oppose:** 1%
- **Somewhat Oppose:** 0%
- **Unsure:** 2%
Do you support or oppose President Biden’s Build Back Better policy proposal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Support</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Support</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Oppose</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Oppose</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total Support:** 12%  
**Total Oppose:** 84%

Do you support or oppose President Biden’s plan to extend COVID-era Child Tax Credit of $300/month for children age 0-5 and $250/month for children age 6-17?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Support</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Support</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Oppose</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Oppose</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</table>

**Total Support:** 11%  
**Total Oppose:** 82%
Do you support or oppose President Biden’s policies that have reduced domestic energy production like cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline and rescinding permits to drill on federal land?

- STRONGLY SUPPORT: 2%
- SOMEWHAFT SUPPORT: 6%
- STRONGLY OPPOSE: 79%
- SOMEWHAFT OPPOSE: 10%
- UNSURE: 3%

8% SUPPORT
89% OPPOSE