

WISCONSIN

EMPLOYER SURVEY

SUMMER 2023

PUBLIC POLICY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Business Community Looks for Lower Costs in Face of Historic Inflation *Survey Shows Employers Support Policies to Reduced Taxes, Rein in Health Care Costs*

A recent survey found Wisconsin employers continue to struggle with higher costs thanks to historic inflation and a workforce shortage that continues to drive up labor costs. When asked in the Summer 2023 *Wisconsin Employer Survey* what state government could do to help, businesses strongly recommended policies that would reduce the tax burden, make health care more affordable and rein in burdensome regulations.

On taxes, Wisconsin continues to be uncompetitive nationally — and with its neighboring states. Wisconsin has the eighth-highest top individual income tax rate at 7.65 percent, and that rate is higher than all but one other state in the Midwest. Even Illinois has a lower individual income tax rate just under five percent.

According to the survey, Wisconsin businesses almost universally (92%) support reducing the top individual income tax rate from 7.65 percent down to five percent.

Health care costs also are hurting Wisconsin's competitiveness. The state has the fourth highest health care costs in the nation. Respondents to WMC's *Wisconsin Employer Survey* support multiple ways to bring down health-care-related expenses.

First, a strong majority of businesses support requiring health care providers to provide transparency in their pricing so consumers can make purchasing decisions based on value. Second, employers would like to see Wisconsin follow suit of 44 other states by implementing a fee schedule for workers compensation to ensure hospitals cannot unfairly charge employers higher prices.

To combat another top public policy issue facing Wisconsin — the labor shortage — the vast majority of employers are supportive of measures like investing in choice and charter schools (88%), funding a coordinated talent attraction campaign that would encourage workers to move to the state (91%) and increasing funding for apprenticeships, dual enrollment credits and work-based learning opportunities for high school students (98%).

The *Wisconsin Employer Survey* asked a number of other policy-focused questions related to energy.

As more people purchase electric vehicles, 88 percent of respondents support updating state law to allow private businesses to offer electric vehicle (EV) charging services to consumers for a fee. However, that same percentage opposes allowing local governments to use taxpayer subsidies to compete against private businesses for EV charging.

Additionally, nearly all respondents agree that the free market — not government regulators — should determine how to deliver the most affordable and reliable energy to Wisconsin's 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 Summer 2023 edition, WMC surveyed 170 employers that make up a representative sample of its membership. Businesses of all sizes, industries and geographic locations in Wisconsin participated.

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

REDUCE TAXES	28%
MAKE HEALTH CARE MORE AFFORDABLE	27%
REDUCE / REFORM REGULATIONS	23%
REDUCE SPENDING	12%
EDUCATION REFORM	6%
OTHER	3%
TORT / LEGAL REFORM	1%

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

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Do you support or oppose allowing local governments to **charge businesses a tax** based upon the number of vehicles that visit their business each day to **help pay for local road improvements**?

SUPPORT

10%

SUPPORT STRONGLY	1%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT	9%

OPPOSE

90%

OPPOSE STRONGLY	76%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT	14%

Do you support or oppose updating state law to **allow private businesses to offer electric vehicle charging services** to consumers for a fee?

SUPPORT

88%

SUPPORT STRONGLY	33%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT	55%

OPPOSE

11%

OPPOSE STRONGLY	6%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT	5%

Do you support or oppose **allowing local governments** to use taxpayer subsidies to **compete against private businesses** for services like electric vehicle charging?

SUPPORT STRONGLY 2%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT 10%
OPPOSE STRONGLY 63%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT 25%

SUPPORT

12%

OPPOSE

88%

When deciding **how to deliver the most affordable** and **reliable energy** to Wisconsin's economy, should the market guide those decisions, or should they be decided by government regulators?

FREE
MARKET

95%

GOVERNMENT
REGULATIONS

5%

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Do you support or oppose **reducing the top individual income tax rate** from 7.65% down to 5%?

SUPPORT STRONGLY	75%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT	18%
OPPOSE STRONGLY	2%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT	5%

SUPPORT
93%

OPPOSE
7%

Do you support or oppose **requiring health care providers to provide transparency in their pricing** so consumers can make purchasing decisions based on value?

SUPPORT
100%

SUPPORT STRONGLY	85%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT	15%

OPPOSE
1%

OPPOSE STRONGLY	0%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT	1%

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

Do you support or oppose **placing limits** on how much **health care providers can charge for procedures** under the workers compensation program, as 44 other states of have done, in order to control costs for employers?

SUPPORT

95%

SUPPORT STRONGLY 73%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT 22%

OPPOSE

5%

OPPOSE STRONGLY 1%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT 4%

Do you support or oppose **funding for a coordinated talent attraction campaign** that would conduct advertising to encourage workers to move to our state?

SUPPORT STRONGLY 53%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT 40%

OPPOSE STRONGLY 3%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT 5%

SUPPORT

93%

OPPOSE

8%

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Do you support or oppose **additional funding for apprenticeships, dual enrollment credits and work-based learning opportunities** for high school students?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	78%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT	21%
OPPOSE STRONGLY	1%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT	1%

SUPPORT
99%

OPPOSE
2%

Do you support or oppose **state tax credits** that would encourage **employers to invest in childcare services** for employees?

SUPPORT
82%

SUPPORT STRONGLY	37%
SUPPORT SOMEWHAT	45%

OPPOSE
19%

OPPOSE STRONGLY	3%
OPPOSE SOMEWHAT	16%

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