



AARP Wisconsin Legislative Issues Survey



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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our website, www.aarp.org. AARP Foundation is our affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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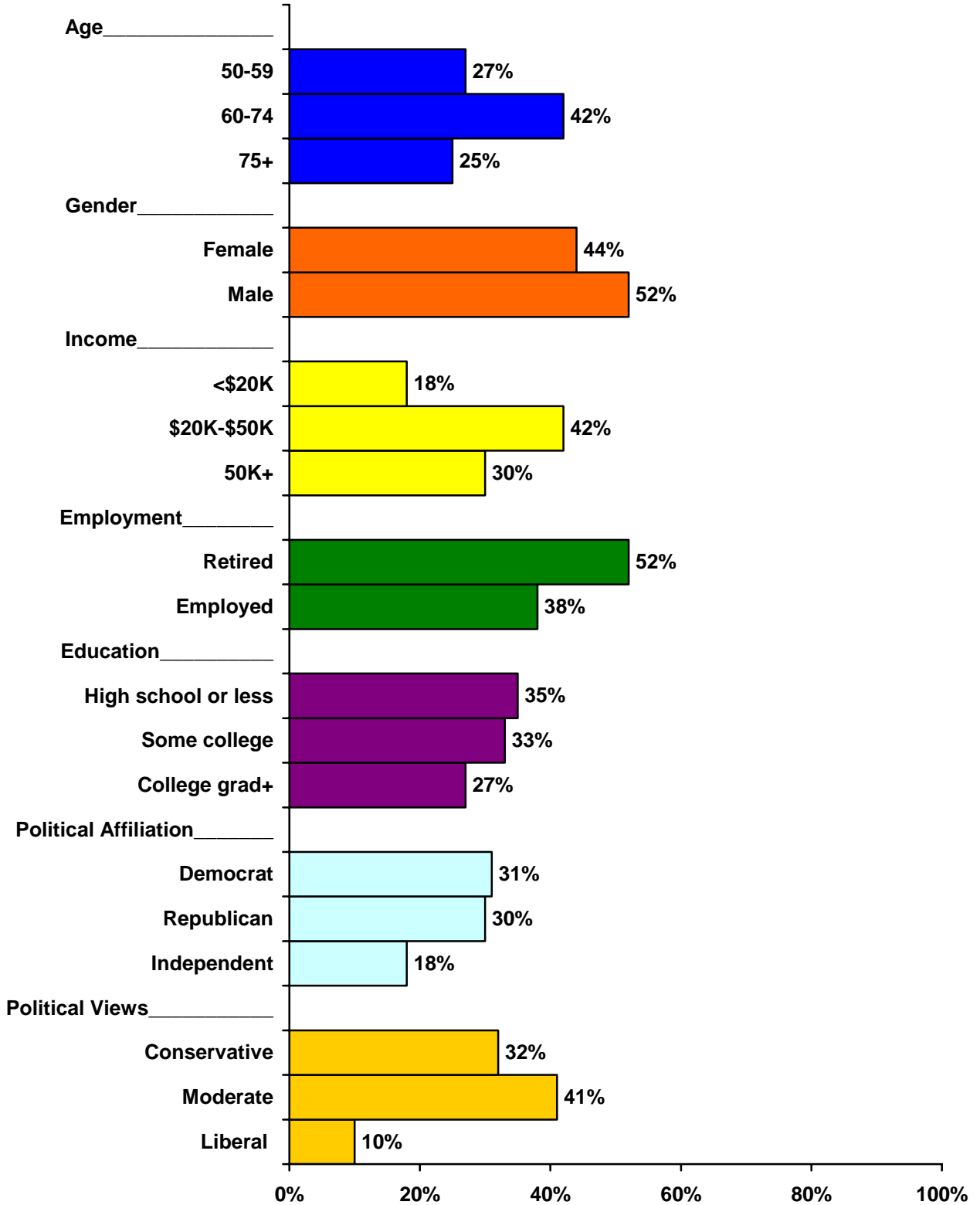
Background

The *AARP Wisconsin Legislative Issues Survey* explores the attitudes and opinions of 1,285 Wisconsin members on several consumer and legislative issues. In addition, this survey gauges state legislative priorities of AARP members in Wisconsin. As of December 2004, the approximate number of AARP members in Wisconsin was 750,000.

Highlights

- More than eight in ten Wisconsin members (83%) say they oppose cuts to health and long-term care services for children, older persons, and people with disabilities. Seven in ten Badger State members oppose cuts to education including K-12 and higher education (69%), and two in three members oppose cuts to municipalities and counties that pay for fire and police protection, senior centers, and parks and recreation (65%).
- When given a choice among six possible ways to raise revenues, at least three-quarters of Wisconsin members support closing business loopholes and exemptions (85%), increasing the tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$.85 (77%), and increasing the tax on beer, wine, and liquor (74%).
- More than six in ten Wisconsin members (63%) support raising taxes if the money generated prevented cuts to home and community-based health and long-term care services.
- At least three-quarters of Wisconsin members say it should be a top or high priority for AARP Wisconsin to work on availability, cost, and quality of health care (91%); access to affordable prescription drugs (88%); availability, cost, and quality of long-term care services (77%); and how older persons can remain in their own homes or communities as they age (74%).
- Over nine in ten Wisconsin members (91%) say when they need to get somewhere they drive. If they were unable to drive themselves, nine in ten members (89%) would ride with family or a friend. Another six in ten members (60%) would walk. About a third would use a senior or community van (38%), taxi (36%), or public transportation (34%).
- Fifty-six percent of Wisconsin members agree with the statement: *“If I were no longer able to drive, it would be difficult for me to continue to live in my current neighborhood.”*

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N =1,285)



Methodology

AARP conducted the *AARP Wisconsin Legislative Issues Survey* during October and November 2004. A random sample of 2,000 AARP members in Wisconsin, proportionally stratified by three age segments, 50 to 59, 60 to 74, and 75+, was selected from AARP's membership database. Each sampled member was contacted about the survey in four ways: a pre-notification postcard, the survey itself, a reminder postcard, and a second survey. Sixty-four percent of the sampled Wisconsin members returned surveys by the cut-off date, providing 1,285 useable surveys for analysis. Thus, the survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 2.7 percent.¹ Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of the age segments in the member population of Wisconsin. As of December 2004, the approximate number of AARP members in Wisconsin was 750,000.

¹ This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would fall in a range of 2.78 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every AARP member in Wisconsin age 50 or older had been surveyed.

Annotated Questionnaire

2004 AARP Wisconsin Legislative Issues Survey

(AARP Members n = 1285; Response Rate = 64%; Sampling Error = $\pm 2.7\%$)
(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple response.)

State Legislative Issues

1. To be effective, AARP Wisconsin wants to work on the most important issues facing Wisconsin AARP members. Keeping in mind what is most important to you, how much of a priority should it be for AARP to work on the following legislative issues in Wisconsin?

	Top Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Not a Priority	Not Sure	No Response
a. Availability, cost, and quality of health care.	61%	30%	5%	1%	1%	<.5%	2%
b. Consumer protection against fraud.	26%	36%	29%	6%	1%	<.5%	2%
c. How older persons can remain in their own homes or communities as they age.	36%	39%	19%	3%	1%	1%	2%
d. Availability, cost, and quality of long-term care services.	35%	42%	17%	2%	1%	<.5%	2%
e. Access to affordable utility services and rates.	25%	36%	27%	7%	3%	1%	2%
f. Access to affordable prescription drugs.	61%	27%	7%	1%	2%	<.5%	2%
g. Continued support for Senior Care – Wisconsin’s prescription drug assistance program for residents 65+ who meet eligibility requirements.	41%	31%	18%	3%	3%	1%	2%
h. Expanding Medicaid, the government health insurance program for low income people.	27%	28%	27%	9%	5%	1%	2%
i. Preventing elder abuse.	34%	28%	25%	7%	3%	1%	3%
j. Regulating the fees charged by check-cashing outlets and pay day lenders.	19%	18%	23%	17%	19%	3%	2%

1. (CONTINUED) To be effective, AARP Wisconsin wants to work on the most important issues facing Wisconsin AARP members. Keeping in mind what's most important to you, how much of a priority should it be for AARP to work on the following legislative issues in Wisconsin?

	Top Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Not a Priority	Not Sure	No Response
k. Regulation of mortgage lenders to prevent abusive practices.	16%	28%	31%	13%	7%	2%	3%
l. Enabling grandparents who are caring for grandchildren to obtain the necessary financial, medical, educational, and legal services for these children.	22%	34%	26%	9%	6%	1%	3%
m. Increasing transportation options for the elderly and disabled.	19%	32%	34%	8%	3%	1%	2%
n. Reducing age discrimination.	19%	28%	33%	11%	5%	2%	4%
o. Access to affordable housing.	21%	35%	27%	8%	5%	1%	4%
p. Improving health insurance coverage for the uninsured.	34%	32%	21%	7%	4%	1%	2%
q. Reforming long-term care by adopting services like Family Care (Wisconsin's long-term care service for older people and people with disabilities) and Partnership (Wisconsin's home – and community-based, consumer-responsive, and quality-driven.)	25%	35%	26%	5%	2%	5%	3%
r. Increasing the fines for companies that violate Wisconsin's "Do Not Call" law.	28%	24%	24%	14%	8%	1%	2%

AARP Roles and Activities at the State Level

2. Listed below are some opportunities AARP could provide within Wisconsin to address member interests and concerns. Would you personally use the opportunity if it were offered in Wisconsin?

Check ALL that apply

%

- 35 One-time educational events on topics of interest or concern to you
- 49 Written information on topics of interest or concern to you
- 33 Activities to improve state laws, policies, regulations, or practices that affect you
- 10 Volunteer your time to an AARP activity in your own community
- 23 Volunteer your time with worthy organizations in your community
- 15 AARP Chapter meetings in your community that give you an opportunity to meet other people and provide some community services
- 22 Not Sure
- 7 No Response

3. If AARP sponsored an educational activity or event (on topics such as Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid) in your community, how likely would you be to attend?

%

- 21 Very likely
- 39 Somewhat likely
- 17 Not very likely
- 9 Not at all likely
- 12 Not sure
- 2 No Response

4. If AARP sponsored a social activity or event (such as outings to sporting events, entertainment, or picnics) in your community, how likely would you be to attend?

%

- 9 Very likely
- 30 Somewhat likely
- 30 Not very likely
- 20 Not at all likely
- 11 Not sure
- 2 No Response

5. If AARP sponsored educational or social activities and events, when would it be most convenient for you to attend?

<u>%</u>	
31	Weekdays before 5 pm
15	Weekdays after 5 pm
7	Weekends before 5 pm
3	Weekends after 5 pm
32	Not sure
12	No Response

Long-Term Care

Long-term care refers to care provided over an extended period of time at home, in a community setting, or in a nursing home. People of all ages who are frail, ill, or disabled who need assistance with regular daily activities, such as getting dressed, bathing, preparing meals, or eating may receive long-term care services.

6. If you or a family member needed long-term care services, where would you be most likely to find out about these services?

Please check your top three choices only.

<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>	
46	Family/friend	50	Physician
5	Newspaper advertisement	10	Clergy
24	Benefit Specialist	35	Hospital Discharge Planner
25	AARP	8	Internet
51	County Department on Aging	3	Other:_____
8	Telephone book	3	Not sure
		2	No Response

State Budget

Wisconsin is facing difficult economic choices in the coming months as the governor and state legislators try to balance the state budget. There are a number of approaches to balancing the budget: cutting current services, increasing state tax revenues, or combining both cuts in services and increases in tax revenues.

7. To balance the state budget, would you support or oppose....

		Strongly Support Cuts	Somewhat Support Cuts	Somewhat Oppose Cuts	Strongly Oppose Cuts	Not Sure	No Response
a.	Cuts to health and long-term care services for children, older persons, and people with disabilities.	2%	8%	24%	59%	4%	3%
b.	Cuts to education including K-12 and higher education.	6%	16%	28%	41%	6%	3%
c.	Cuts to highways and road maintenance, and construction.	7%	31%	35%	16%	7%	5%
d.	Cuts to public safety, courts, and jails.	6%	27%	35%	23%	6%	4%
e.	Cuts to municipalities and counties that pay for fire and police protection, senior centers, and parks, libraries, or other public amenities.	4%	22%	32%	34%	6%	3%

8. Another approach to balance the state budget is to look for new ways to raise revenue. To balance the state budget, would you support or oppose....

	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure	No Response
a. Increasing corporate taxes. Currently corporate income taxes make up 6% of the total state tax revenue.	36%	32%	13%	9%	7%	4%
b. Closing business tax loopholes and exemptions.	63%	22%	6%	3%	4%	3%
c. Increasing the tax on beer, wine, and liquor.	39%	35%	12%	9%	2%	3%
d. Increased fees for vehicle registration and certificates of marriage, birth, death, etc.	8%	29%	31%	27%	2%	3%
e. Increasing the sales tax by one penny and expanding the services to which the sales tax applies. Low income households would receive a sales tax credit to offset the sales tax increase.	22%	35%	17%	20%	4%	3%
f. Increasing the current tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$.85. to \$1.62 per pack.	57%	20%	9%	10%	2%	2%

9. Home and community-based health and long-term care services are provided in the home or in community settings; they may include home delivered meals, help with chores and personal care, home health care, and adult day care. Do you support or oppose raising taxes if the money generated prevented cuts to home and community-based health and long-term care services?

<u>%</u>	
25	Strongly support
38	Somewhat support
16	Somewhat oppose
9	Strongly oppose
10	Not sure
2	No Response

10. Current Wisconsin law provides some older Wisconsin residents property tax relief through the State’s Homestead program. In general, credit is granted to older residents who meet eligibility criteria based on income relative to property burden. Do you support or oppose expanded property tax relief for Wisconsin seniors?

%
 51 Strongly support
 33 Somewhat support
 7 Somewhat oppose
 4 Strongly oppose
 3 Not sure
 3 No Response

Transportation Issues

11. How often would you say you get out of your house or apartment and go somewhere (for example, shopping, visiting, or exercising) in a typical week?

%
 1 Not at all
 9 1 or 2 times
 20 3 to 5 times
 67 More than 5 times
 1 Don’t Know
 2 No Response

12. For each of the following destinations, how often do transportation problems interfere with your ability to go there? If you do not go to that destination, check the Don’t Go box.

Destination	Never	Sometimes	Often	Don’t Go	No Response
a. Your doctor	83%	10%	3%	2%	3%
b. Your family	81%	9%	4%	2%	4%
c. Your friend	79%	11%	3%	4%	4%
d. Your place of worship	79%	6%	4%	8%	3%
e. The grocery of drug store	83%	9%	4%	1%	3%
f. Shopping for clothes or household items	79%	12%	3%	3%	3%
g. Entertainment (e.g. movies, sports, eating out)	75%	12%	3%	6%	3%
h. Volunteer activities	65%	6%	2%	23%	4%
i. Work	52%	3%	1%	38%	6%

13. In general, when you need to get somewhere how do you usually get there?
(Check all that apply)

<u>%</u>	
34	Walk
91	Drive
28	Get a ride with family or friends
2	Take a taxi
3	Take public transportation
1	Bike
2	Take a Senior or Community Van
2	Take transportation provided to people with disabilities who cannot use or get to public transportation
1	Take a Shared Ride Taxi, with lower fares and sharing the ride with other passengers
2	Some other way (Specify) _____
2	No Response

14. If you were unable to drive yourself, what kind(s) of transportation would you use to get you to the places you need and want to go? (For each type, please check yes if you would use it, no if you would not use it, or not available if you don't have this kind of transportation in your area.)

	Yes	No	Not Available	No Response
a. Walk	60%	18%	4%	19%
b. Ride with family or friends	89%	2%	2%	8%
c. Public transportation	34%	15%	30%	22%
d. Taxi	36%	22%	19%	23%
e. Senior or Community Van	38%	22%	15%	24%
f. Transportation for those with disabilities	24%	30%	15%	30%
g. Shared Ride taxi	20%	24%	21%	35%

15. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: *If I were no longer able to drive, it would be difficult for me to continue to live in my current neighborhood. (or neighborhood? Or community?)*

<u>%</u>	
30	Strongly Agree
26	Somewhat Agree
18	Neither Agree nor Disagree
15	Somewhat Disagree
8	Not sure
3	No Response

16. Do you have difficulty with any of the following:

	Yes	No	No Response
a. Going out alone, for instance to shop or visit a doctor's office.	8%	88%	5%
b. Dressing, bathing, or getting around inside your home.	3%	93%	5%
c. Seeing the words and letters in an ordinary newspaper even when wearing glasses.	8%	87%	5%
d. Hearing what is said in a normal conversation when using a hearing aid if one is used.	10%	83%	7%
e. Lifting or carrying something as heavy as ten pounds, like a bag full of groceries.	16%	80%	4%
f. Climbing a flight of stairs without resting.	16%	79%	5%
g. Walking a quarter mile (about three city blocks).	19%	76%	5%
h. Having your speech understood by others.	3%	92%	5%
i. Using the telephone.	3%	93%	5%
j. Working at a job or business.	12%	73%	14%

About You

The following questions are for classification purposes only, and will be kept entirely confidential.

D1. In the last 12 months, have you accessed the Internet from your home or work, or from some other source such as your local library? (Check all that apply)

- %
- 49 Yes, from home
- 19 Yes, from work
- 9 Yes, from some other source
- 40 No
- 5 No Response

D2. Are you male or female?

<u>%</u>	
52	Male
44	Female

D3. What is your age as of your last birthday? _____ (in years)

<u>%</u>	
27	50-59
42	60-74
25	75+
6	No Response

D4. Thinking about your state elections for Wisconsin Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior?

<u>%</u>	
69	Always vote
22	Sometimes miss one
3	Rarely vote
2	Never vote
<.5	Not sure
4	No Response

D5. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

<u>%</u>	
7	Less than high school
28	High school graduate or equivalent
33	Some college or technical training beyond high school
14	College graduate (4 years)
13	Post-graduate or professional degree

D6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

<u>%</u>	
26	Employed or self employed <u>full-time</u>
12	Employed or self-employed <u>part-time</u>
52	Retired and not working
3	Other such as homemaker
1	Unemployed and looking for work
6	No Response

D7. Which of the following describes your political party affiliation?

<u>%</u>	
30	A Republican
31	A Democrat
18	An Independent
4	Other
9	Not sure
8	No Response

D8. How do you characterize your political views?

<u>%</u>	
32	Conservative
41	Moderate
10	Liberal
4	None of the above
11	Not sure
3	No Response

D9. What is your 5-digit zip code? (WRITE IN YOUR ZIP CODE.) _ _ _ _ _

D10. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2003?

<u>%</u>	
4	Less than \$10,000
14	\$10,000 to \$19,999
17	\$20,000 to \$29,999
13	\$30,000 to \$39,999
13	\$40,000 to \$49,999
16	\$50,000 to \$74,999
14	\$75,000 or more
10	No Response

Thank you for completing this survey. Please use the postage-paid envelope and return it to State Member Research, AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, by **November 24, 2004**.

AARP
Knowledge Management
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