



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **TABOR and Kids: Can They Survive Together?**

*New Poll Relays Answers to Questions about Kids and TABOR Support*

**Madison** – The public’s inclination to support TABOR and the property tax freeze weakens considerably when they consider the resulting cuts in services they value, according to a recently released poll of 600 Wisconsin residents conducted by the Public Policy Forum for the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

Like other polls that asked individuals whether or not they supported the concept of taxing and spending limits, this poll found 65 percent of the respondents answering favorably. However, when asked about their support for limiting taxes and spending if those limits also meant reductions in spending for services from public education to health care for low-income children, nearly half indicated there were cuts that would make them less likely to support TABOR. The interviews were conducted with 600 randomly selected adults from 69 counties that represented a cross section of Wisconsin’s population. Over half of the respondents did not have children in the home.

“While we weren’t surprised that the public’s support for the basic concept of TABOR and a property tax freeze was as strong as it was, we weren’t sure how their support would be affected if they considered the cuts in services to kids that both measures would force,” said WCCF Executive Director Charity Eleson. “What this tells us is that tax and spending limits, while popular, will not remain so if policy makers cut services, which we believe will be the inevitable result of TABOR or a property tax freeze.”

The poll found that of TABOR supporters:

- 48 percent were less likely to support it if it resulted in cuts to police services;
- 47 percent were less likely to support it if it resulted in cuts to health care coverage for low-income children;
- 47 percent were less likely to support it if it resulted in cuts to public schools;
- 43 percent were less likely to support it if it resulted in cuts to child care tuition assistance for low-income working families; and
- 41 percent were less likely to support it if it resulted in cuts to public libraries.

When asked about their support for TABOR if cuts were made in early education, technical colleges, parks and recreation and smaller classroom sizes for K-3 elementary classes, support of TABOR amongst likely supporters fell off between 31 and 39 percent.

“This shows that people in Wisconsin care about protecting investments in services for children,” said Eleson. “While there may be a short-term political gain from passing TABOR or the freeze, those actions are likely to produce a negative public reaction when they necessitate service cuts in popular programs.”

The poll showed a similar, but somewhat stronger decline in support for a property tax freeze when respondents considered cuts in services. Sixty-four percent of those polled favored a property tax freeze. But when asked about their support if certain cuts in services were made as a result of the freeze, support fell off between 53 and 33 percent, with the strongest reduction in support related to police protection and programs to prevent child abuse and neglect.

“Another fascinating element of these findings is that over half of those polled did not have children in the home, yet they clearly place a priority on protecting services that help and protect children,” said Eleson. “We know that from health care coverage to child abuse and neglect prevention to education, support for Wisconsin’s investments in services to children is substantial, and these services will clearly be affected by policy changes that freeze spending and taxes.”

The poll found very high levels of support for public services that protect or serve children. When asked to assess the importance of ten different services; nine of the ten were ranked as important by at least 80 percent of the respondents.

A copy of the polling questions and summary will be posted at the WCCF website: [www.wccf.org](http://www.wccf.org).

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