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The Wisconsin Values Budget

Alternative State Budget Makes Better Choices Based on a Balanced Approach

An impressive group of nonprofit organizations spanning a broad range of constituencies yesterday unveiled an alternative to Governor Walker's budget at media conferences in Madison and Milwaukee. The Wisconsin Values Budget (see <http://www.wccf.org/pdf/valuesbudget.pdf>) provides a balanced approach to the state's fiscal challenges, demonstrating that the Governor's choices are not necessary ones. There are better options that preserve Wisconsin's remarkable record of progress and innovation in such key areas as education, health care, mass transit, and support for low-income workers striving to join the middle class. The Wisconsin Values Budget maintains the state's investment in the future without sacrificing our gains of the past. The lead sponsors of the budget alternative are the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Citizen Action of Wisconsin, the Institute for Wisconsin's Future, and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS).

"We reject the notion that we have 'no choice' but to balance the budget through deep, painful cuts alone," said Ken Taylor, executive director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. "Our approach is more consistent with the values Wisconsinites hold. It's better for people and it's better for the economy."

Instead of relying on spending cuts alone, the Wisconsin Values Budget addresses the deficit through a combination of spending cuts; targeted revenue increases that require corporations and the wealthy to contribute their fair share; improved revenue collection efforts; and public employee concessions.

Speaking on behalf of small business, Brad Werntz, founder of Boulders Climbing Gym in Madison, said, "We business owners need certain things: We need good schools, to attract today's best talent and to educate tomorrow's. We need structures, goods, and services that maintain a high quality of living in sustainable cities. Our customers, as well as our employees, need discretionary dollars in their pockets, access to health care, and sustainable transportation. In short, we need a state budget that preserves the very things that make Wisconsin a great place to live, work, raise a family, and do business. The Values Budget does a much better job than the Governor's of providing those things."

Co-sponsoring organizations include Wisconsin Alliance of Retired Americans, Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers Inc, 9 to 5 Milwaukee, Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters, Milwaukee Latino Health Coalition, United Council of UW Students, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin, Equality Wisconsin Education Fund, MTI, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Reproductive Justice Collective, Family Farm Defenders, the Madison Institute, Apprentice Organizers Project, Voces de la Frontera, National Association of Social Workers Wisconsin, WISDOM, Wisconsin League of Women Voters Education Fund, Mental health America of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Community Action Program Association, and I Love My Public School.

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