

Consumer Protection

1. Asbestos Lawsuits – [2013 Act 154](#) – Restricts the legal options available to victims of asbestos-related injuries who seek compensation from companies that used asbestos.
2. Zombie Homes – [2015 Act 376](#) – Makes it more difficult for communities to rid their neighborhoods of abandoned homes by extending the time that lenders have to decide whether to sell foreclosed, abandoned property from the current five weeks, to one year.
3. Lead in Paint – [2015 Act 55](#) – Changes the definition of “lead-bearing paint” to allow greater amounts of lead in paint before the paint is legally considered lead paint. This law also forbids the state Department of Health Services from redefining lead paint in the future in order to conform to stricter guidelines issued by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
4. Lead Paint Inspections – [2015 Act 122](#) – Reduces state lead paint inspection and testing requirements.
5. Lead Paint Liability – [2013 Act 20](#) – Exempts lead paint manufacturers from future products liability lawsuits.
6. Payday Loan Regulations – [2011 Act 32](#) – Reduces payday loan regulations intended to protect consumers from predatory loan practices.
7. Debt Collectors – [2015 Act 155](#) – Eases regulations on debt collectors by reducing the information that merchants and debt collectors are required to provide consumers in lawsuits to collect past-due bill payments or debts. The new law also exempts merchants and debt collectors from legal damages, penalties, and attorney fees for failing to comply with the Wisconsin Consumer Act of 1973 unless consumers can prove that their failure to follow the law was intentional.
8. Lemon Law – [2013 Act 101](#) – Waters down provisions of Wisconsin’s “lemon law” that allows consumers to be made whole when they have been sold a motor vehicle that turns out to be a lemon.
9. Variable Rate Loans – [2015 Act 54](#) – Allows a lender making a variable rate mortgage loan to include a lower, discounted initial interest rate. The peddling of such low, discounted initial rates on mortgage loans was a factor in the financial crisis of 2008.
10. Low Interest Rate on Judgments – [2011 Act 69](#) – Reduces the interest rate on certain judgments in civil actions against businesses and others from an annual rate of 12% to 1% above the prime rate.
11. Compensatory Damages – [2011 Act 219](#) – Eliminates compensatory and punitive damages for racial, sexual and other acts of employment discrimination or genetic testing. Previous state law allowed for damages of up to \$300,000 in addition to back-pay and other amounts awarded in administrative proceedings depending on the size of

the employer, labor organization or employment agency. This law eliminated these types of damages, reducing the total amount of damages victims of discrimination can receive in court.

12. Telecommunications Deregulation – [2011 Act 22](#) – Eliminates the Wisconsin Public Service Commission's authority to regulate prices and conduct rate cases involving the telecommunications industry.

Disability Rights

1. Personal Care Services – [2015 Act 55](#) – Requires an independent assessment and approval of the need for specific personal care services received by MA patients before they can be provided, and reduces the MA budget by \$15 million in 2016-17.

2. IRIS – [2015 Act 55](#) – Requires an assessment and prior approval for certain long-term services for the disabled that used to be allowed in the IRIS (Include, Respect, I-Self Direct) program. This change could make it harder for people with disabilities to stay in their homes.

Environment

1. Mining – [2013 Act 1](#) – Loosens several state environmental safeguards for mining. The measure was requested and largely developed by Gogebic Taconite, a subsidiary of an out-of-state mining company that wanted to develop a massive open-pit iron mine in northern Wisconsin. Roughly the same bill that was approved in 2013 failed in the 2011 legislative session. In between the two bills, the company contributed \$700,000 in 2012 to Wisconsin Club for Growth, a secretive issue ad group that spent an estimated [\\$9.1 million](#) to help Walker and GOP senators win their recall elections.

2. Nuclear Power – [2015 Act 344](#) – Repeals Wisconsin's 33-year-old ban on nuclear power plant construction.

3. Shoreland Zoning – [2015 Act 167](#) – Relaxes standards for placing structures along the shores of lakes and rivers, and prohibits counties from using zoning ordinances to regulate or restrict shoreline construction projects, like boathouses and fishing rafts.

4. Recycling – [2011 Act 32](#) – Attempts to eliminate all state funding for recycling and the state mandate that communities recycle waste. The legislature restores the mandate, but significantly reduces funding for the program.

5. State Parks – [2015 Act 55](#) – Eliminates all state tax support for state parks, a move that will likely increase the number and amount of user fees for state park maintenance and other costs.

6. DNR Scientists – [2015 Act 55](#) – Cuts 18 DNR science jobs to effectively replace scientific data used in natural resources and environmental policy decisions with private industry research.

7. Wetland Protection – [2011 Act 6](#) – Exempts a wetland in Ashwaubenon from water quality standards. The wetland targeted by the law was for some property owned by a Green Bay Packers Board member who wanted to develop it for a Bass Pro Shops store. After the controversy became public, Bass Pro shops cancelled the project. The land is now being developed by other entities.

8. Phosphorus – [2013 Act 378](#) – Creates a statewide variance to existing wastewater discharge limits for phosphorus available to all facility discharge permit holders if complying with the limits would impose substantial and widespread adverse social and economic impacts and could not be achieved without a major facility upgrade. Facilities would need to develop a plan for gaining compliance within 20 years.

9. High-Capacity Wells – [2013 Act 20](#) – Prohibits challenges to an application to the Department of Natural Resources for construction of a high capacity well because the applicant did not consider the cumulative impacts that the proposed well would have on existing wells in the area.

10. Hazardous Emissions – [2011 Act 122](#) – Prohibits the DNR from regulating hazardous emissions from agricultural waste using rules that are stricter than federal law. The law benefits so-called factory farms and other large agricultural operations.

11. Landfills – [2011 Act 103](#) – Exempts from future liability those who discharge hazardous substances in state-licensed landfills if they voluntarily investigate and clean up the property to the DNR's satisfaction. But the liability exemption would extend into the future even if the cleanup ultimately fails to resolve the pollution problem.

12. Wetlands – [2011 Act 118](#) – Removes some wetlands protections and makes it easier for certain wetlands to be polluted. Numerous changes made by this law include allowing more time for discharges to be stopped, and permitting discharges into woodland ponds without a permit.

Immigrant Rights

1. Local IDs Banned – [2015 Act 374](#) – Prohibits local governments from issuing photo IDs, except in limited circumstances, that could be used to register to vote, and prevents previously issued photo IDs from being used to register to vote.

2. In-state Tuition – [2011 Act 32](#) – Repeals a 2009 law and bans lower, in-state tuition rates for undocumented persons who graduate from Wisconsin high schools and who want to attend University of Wisconsin System schools.

Justice and the Courts

1. Exempting Legislators and the Governor from John Doe Criminal Probes – [2015 Act 64](#) – Shields politicians who violate ethics and elections laws from John Doe probes.

2. Venue Shopping – [2011 Act 61](#) – Allows plaintiffs in legal disputes with the state to pick the county circuit court, and on appeals, the state appellate court of his or her choice. Under previous state law, the venue for court actions involving the state was always Dane County because state government is seated there. The act enabled former

Republican Assembly Speaker [Scott Jensen](#) to resolve a case against him in Waukesha County in 2006 in the so-called [Caucus Scandal](#) when then-District Attorney Brad Schimel, who is now the attorney general, gave him a sweetheart deal.

3. Immediate Appeals of Injunctions and Orders – [2013 Act 156](#) – Allows the immediate appeal of circuit court injunctions, restraining orders, or other actions affecting the enforcement of any state law to an appellate court or to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. This allows special interest groups to seek instant relief at the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which tilts heavily in their favor.

4. Medical Liability – [2011 Act 2](#) – Limits liability against long-term care providers in civil lawsuits, places stricter limits on product liability lawsuits and caps the amount of court-awarded non-economic damages to two times the amount of compensatory damages recovered by the plaintiff, or \$200,000, whichever is greater. The law, known as Act 2, benefits long-term care providers, health care providers, medical personnel, insurance companies and manufacturers at the expense of aggrieved consumers.

5. Skiing Liability – [2011 Act 199](#) – Exempts ski hill operators from liability in skiing accidents if the operators meet certain conditions, and makes customers liable for collisions.

6. Auto Accident Statute of Limitations – [2015 Act 133](#) – Sets time limits on when certain legal actions can be filed in auto accident cases.

7. Dog Bites – [2015 Act 112](#) – Limits the liability of dog owners and damages paid by their insurers when people are bitten by dogs in some situations.

Labor Rights

1. Public Employee Bargaining Rights – [2011 Act 10](#) – In addition to severely restricting the rights of public workers to collectively bargain, this act mandates annual certifications for the representatives of bargaining units; requires that a majority of all members must vote to certify – not just a majority of those voting; and prohibits employers from deducting labor union dues from paychecks.

2. “Right to Work” – [2015 Act 1](#) – Prevents unions from requiring an employee to be a union member in order to reap the benefits of contract provisions the union has negotiated in bargaining on behalf of its members. This law was sought by Walker’s largest campaign contributor, [Diane Hendricks](#), owner of ABC Building Supply Co., Beloit. Hendricks and Walker were recorded on videotape in 2011 talking about the governor’s “divide and conquer” strategy against unions shortly before he introduced his budget plan that included severely slashing public employee collective bargaining rights.

3. Prevailing Wage Law – [2015 Act 55](#) – Changes the way wages are calculated for members of certain trade groups on certain local public works projects, which will result in less pay for the workers.

4. No Day of Rest – [2015 Act 55](#) – Eliminates the practice of requiring all workers to be given one day off within a seven-day week.
5. Equal Pay for Women – [2011 Act 219](#) – Limits options for women to sue to enforce equal pay provisions.
6. References to Living Wage – [2015 Act 55](#) – Eliminates language in state law that asserted the state’s interest in having workers receive wages that provide for an adequate standard of living.
7. State Civil Service System – [2015 Act 150](#) – Changes the state’s pioneering civil service system by consolidating the personnel process within the partisan Department of Administration (DOA), replacing merit exams for most civil service positions with resume screening by DOA, and making it easier and faster to fire employees.

Local Control

Since 2011, the GOP-controlled legislature and Walker have approved more than [100 proposals](#) that prohibit or restrict the ability of local governments to pass ordinances affecting environmental, land use, transportation, construction and other matters. Here are a few of those laws:

1. Paid Sick Leave – [2011 Act 16](#) – Prevents local governments from requiring public or private employers to provide benefits, like sick leave, for their employees. This act overturned a City of Milwaukee ordinance.
2. Renter Rights – [2015 Act 176](#) – Limits the ability of communities to require rental unit inspections, license landlords, charge inspection fees, and enforce sprinkling ordinances stricter than state law. The law also makes it easier and faster for landlords to evict tenants and dispose of personal property that is left behind.
3. Landlords – [2011 Act 108](#) – Prohibits local governments from passing ordinances more restrictive than state law involving renters’ security deposits.
4. Landlords – [2013 Act 76](#) – Prohibits local government ordinances from: restricting the ability of landlords to recover damage costs from tenants; requiring landlords to communicate with tenants, or with the municipality on anything not required in federal or state law; and requiring landlords to store most property of evicted tenants unless otherwise agreed to by both parties in a signed agreement before the eviction.
5. Shoreland Zoning – [2011 Act 170](#) – Prohibits local governments from enacting shoreland zoning rules that are stricter than state law.
6. Town Shoreland Zoning – [2015 Act 41](#) – Removes the ability of towns to enact different shoreland zoning ordinances than those enacted by counties.
7. Town Shoreland Zoning in Dane County – [2015 Act 178](#) – Allows only Dane County towns to opt out of shared zoning authority with the county so that towns have greater authority over development decisions.

8. Residency Requirements – [2013 Act 20](#) – Prohibits local governments from setting strict residency requirements for their employees.
9. Regulation of Real Estate Brokers – [2013 Act 20](#) – Prohibits local governments from imposing fees on real estate brokers or their services.
10. Erosion and Storm Water Runoff – [2013 Act 20](#) – Prevents local governments from enacting runoff standards stricter than state law.
11. Food and Beverage Size Restrictions – [2013 Act 20](#) – Prevents local governments from restricting the sale of food and beverages based on calories, portion size or nutritional quality.
12. Cell Phone Tower Siting – [2013 Act 20](#) – Limits the ability of local governments to regulate the siting of cell phone and broadcast towers.
13. Insurance Coverage for Pipeline Disasters – [2015 Act 55](#) – Prohibits local governments from requiring pipeline companies to carry extra clean-up insurance for projects going through their borders.
14. Condemnation Authority for Pipeline Companies – [2015 Act 55](#) – Gives out-of-state pipeline companies the power to condemn private property for oil pipeline operations and projects. This authority was previously granted only to private corporations licensed to do business in Wisconsin.
15. Underage Drinking – [2013 Act 215](#) – Prohibits municipalities from issuing ID scanners to retail alcohol establishments that could be used to verify the authenticity of an ID used to buy alcohol.
16. Hunting – [2013 Act 71](#) – Prohibits communities from prohibiting or restricting bow and arrow and crossbow hunting.
17. Doggie Bags – [2015 Act 302](#) – Prohibits communities from banning or regulating plastic bags, takeout or other single-use containers, and coffee cup sleeves.
18. Shooting Ranges – [2013 Act 202](#) – Provides immunity from nuisance complaints, like noise, against shooting ranges and prevents them from being forced to close due to future state or local zoning changes if they were operating before July 16, 2013.
19. Local Moratoriums – [2011 Act 144](#) – Creates requirements that local communities must meet to impose development moratoriums and limits moratoriums to one year plus a six-month extension if necessary.

Public Education and School Vouchers

1. Public School Funding – [2011 Act 32](#) – Cuts state funding for public schools by the largest amount in state history -- \$830 million over two years – and creates a school voucher program for Racine. Increases state spending on voucher schools to about \$300 million from 2011-13.

2. Tech College Funding – [2011 Act 32](#) – Cuts state funding for technical colleges by the largest amount in state history – \$72 million over two years.
3. University of Wisconsin System Funding – [2011 Act 32](#) – Cuts state funding for the UW System equal to the largest amount in state history – \$250 million over two years – and later prohibiting the UW from imposing any general tuition increases.
4. School Vouchers – [2013 Act 20](#) – Creates a statewide school voucher program, with the enrollment in the new choice schools limited to 500 students in 2013-14, and 1,000 students in 2014-15. Increases state spending on voucher schools to about \$385 million from 2013-15.
5. UW Faculty Tenure – [2015 Act 55](#) – Eliminates current law provisions for granting tenure for University of Wisconsin faculty and prohibiting the dismissal of a faculty member except for just cause and after a hearing.
6. School Vouchers – [2015 Act 55](#) – Expands the cap on the statewide voucher program to 1 percent of the student population in each of the state’s school districts in the next year. The percentage would go up steadily over the next decade, after which there would be no longer be a limit. In addition, this law diverts the majority (\$48 million) of limited increases in state aid to schools to private voucher schools, and significantly increases indexing of per pupil aid for students who switch to voucher schools. Increases state spending on voucher schools to about \$494 million from 2015-17.
7. Private School Tuition Break – [2013 Act 20](#) – Creates an income tax deduction of up to \$4,000 a year for kindergarten through 8th grade pupils and up to \$10,000 annually for 9th through 12th grade pupils enrolled in a private school, at a cost of \$30 million a year starting in 2014-15. This effectively provides a statewide voucher for parents who send their children to private school, including those who’ve attended private school all along, and is worth more to tax filers in higher tax brackets.

Safety Net

1. Federal Funds for Expanding Medicaid – [2011 Act 32](#) – Refuses federal funding to expand Medical Assistance (MA), forcing as many as 60,000 people otherwise covered in the MA program to higher-cost private insurance.
2. Earned Income Tax Credit – [2011 Act 32](#) – Reduces the earned income tax credit allowed for low income wage earners to save \$29 million annually, and also repeals indexing of the income ceiling to qualify for the homestead tax deduction to save \$10 million annually.
3. Community Health Centers – [2015 Act 55](#) – Lowers the current reimbursement rate paid to community health centers that provide MA services, and reduces the MA budget by \$9 million in 2016-17.
4. Nursing Homes – [2011 Act 70](#) – Prohibits the Department of Health Services from penalizing nursing homes with fines and forfeitures for violations of state law if the department has levied fines for the same offenses as violations of federal law. The law

benefits nursing home owners whose operations commit multiple violations of state and federal laws.

Taxes and Corporate Welfare

1. Super Majority for Tax Increases – [2011 Act 9](#) – Prohibits any legislative proposal from increasing state sales or income taxes without approval by a 2/3 vote of the Assembly and the Senate, unless the legislature votes to take the issue to a voter referendum.

2. Corporate Tax Cuts – [2011 Act 32](#) – Reduces corporate taxes by over \$200 million during the 2011-13 biennium, and over \$2.3 billion through 2023.

3. New Milwaukee Bucks Arena – [2015 Act 60](#) – Authorizes \$250 million in state bonding to construct a new arena for the privately-owned Milwaukee Bucks basketball team, a \$4 million annual state tax contribution for operations, and a one-time payment of \$10 million in state tax dollars to the Bradley Center Sports and Entertainment Corporation to help it retire existing debt and contractual obligations.

4. Tax Credits – [2013 Act 20](#) – Provides \$75 million in additional economic development credits and makes it easier for companies to receive the credits, including allowing companies to receive credits for jobs they create, even if they are not family-supporting, full-time jobs.

5. Ag Breaks – [2013 Act 324](#) – Creates an exemption from state and local sales taxes for fertilizer blending, feed milling or grain drying equipment. The exemption will cost the state \$1.5 million and counties and special stadium districts a total of \$120,000 annually in lost taxes.

6. Truck Size Exemptions – 2013 Acts [34](#), [48](#), [216](#), [369](#), [377](#), and [2015 Act 171](#) – Allows trucks used to ship goods and materials to exceed previously-allowed length and weight limits, which were originally established for traffic safety reasons.

7. Unemployment Insurance – [2013 Act 36](#) – Allows the Department of Workforce Development to reduce or waive interest charges on employers' unpaid or delinquent unemployment insurance accounts, and uses \$300,000 in tax dollars to fund this provision.

8. Airplanes – [2013 Act 185](#) – Exempts aircraft parts, and the repair and maintenance of any aircraft and aircraft parts, from the sales and use tax. This change is expected to reduce state and county revenues by over \$3 million annually.

9. Rental Property Break – [2013 Act 144](#) – Creates a property tax exemption for businesses that rent personal property, such as machinery and equipment, for less than 364 days a year, at a cost of \$525,000 a year to other property taxpayers.

10. Commercial TV Equipment Break – [2013 Act 346](#) – Creates a \$2.4 million a year tax exemption for sales of equipment used to originate or integrate programming to a person licensed to operate a commercial television or radio station in Wisconsin.

11. Health Savings Accounts – [2011 Act 1](#) – Creates a state income tax credit of up to 6.5% of the amount of any federal tax deduction taken by taxpayers who set aside money in health savings accounts. The law mostly benefits wealthier taxpayers who are working and able to set aside funds to purchase their own health insurance. The law costs the state \$28 million in lost tax revenue annually beginning in fiscal year 2012-13.

12. Ski Break – [2011 Act 32](#) – Creates a \$200,000 a year state sales tax exemption for snow-making and snow-grooming equipment and related fuel, parts and accessories. Wisconsin ski hill operators and ski equipment manufacturers benefit from the exemption.

Voting and Elections

1. Voter ID – [2011 Act 23](#) – Imposes additional requirements for citizens to vote that seem to fall mostly on students, the poor, minorities, and elderly and disabled people. These are groups less likely to have driver's licenses, less likely to be able to get to a Division of Motor Vehicles station to get a license, and more likely to vote for Democratic candidates. Critics, like the [League of Women Voters](#), and [studies](#) have labeled this law a solution in search of a problem because there is scant evidence of voting fraud in Wisconsin or the U.S. They also contend that it is designed to suppress voter turnout.

2. Redistricting – [2011 Act 43](#) – Redraws legislative and Congressional district lines based on population changes reflected in the 2010 U.S. Census. Majority Republicans in the legislature paid law firms [more than \\$2 million](#) to design and successfully defend their redistricting plan in court. The redistricting plan lets legislators pick their voters, rather than the other way around. The plan heavily concentrated Democrats into relatively few districts, created many more districts with merely a comfortable majority of Republicans, and made it all but certain that whoever wins the Republican primary in those districts will go on to an easy win in the general election. This process of cramming one party into a minority of legislative districts creates fewer politically competitive elections and narrows candidates' appeal to those on the far right and far left, rather than broadening their appeal to more mainstream and independent voters of both parties.

The GOP redistricting plan was so successful that Republican Assembly candidates won 60 of 99 Assembly seats in the 2012 races, even though 61 percent of all votes cast in the state were for Democrats.

3. Voting Opportunities – [2013 Act 146](#) – Limits the hours during which municipalities can allow in-person absentee voting to weekdays between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m.

4. Public Funding of State Elections – [2011 Act 32](#)– Eliminates public funding for all legislative and statewide elections, even though numerous polls [-here](#) and [here](#) – over the years have shown most people feel there is too much money in elections and want to reduce the influence of special interests in our elections. Ironically, the \$1.8 million used to publicly fund elections was directed to help implement the controversial Voter ID law.

5. Campaign Finance – [2015 Act 117](#) – Doubles the previous limits on contributions, enables unlimited contributions to political action committees, allows candidates' committees to coordinate with outside advocacy groups, allows corporations to donate to political parties, deletes the requirement that donors must disclose who they work for. This law makes candidates and political parties more [beholden](#) to the influence of special interests.

6. Government Accountability Board – [2015 Act 118](#) – Dismantles a strong national model of nonpartisan oversight and enforcement of state ethics and elections laws and replaces it with two boards composed of mostly partisan appointees with less authority, independence, and resources to conduct investigations.

Weapons

1. Concealed Carry – [2011 Act 35](#) – Allows individuals with state permits to carry concealed guns.

2. 48-Hour Waiting Period – [2015 Act 22](#) – Eliminates the 48-hour waiting period on gun purchases.

3. Castle Doctrine – [2011 Act 94](#) – Creates legal protections for people who shoot a person inside a home, business or vehicle, or on someone's porch, yard or driveway.

4. Switchblades – [2015 Act 149](#) – Allows individuals who are licensed to carry concealed guns to carry switchblades and other knives.

5. Pepper Spray – [2013 Act 77](#) – Allows minors to possess pepper spray if it is provided to them by their parents or guardians, and eliminates the state's authority to regulate pepper spray standards, packaging and sales.

Women's Health

1. Family Planning – [2011 Act 32](#) – Eliminates all state funding for women's health centers and for family planning services.

2. Ultrasound Viewing and Admitting Privileges – [2013 Act 37](#) – Requires all women undergoing an abortion procedure to view an ultrasound image of the fetus before the procedure, and requires doctors performing the abortion to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of where the abortion would be performed.

3. Abortion Restrictions – [2015 Act 56](#) – Prohibits doctors from performing abortions if the fetus is developed enough to be able to experience pain, which the bill presumes as occurring after 20 weeks.

4. Planned Parenthood – [2015 Act 152](#) – Limits how much Planned Parenthood could be reimbursed for prescription drugs through Medicaid, cutting as much as \$4 million a year to the group.

5. Planned Parenthood – [2015 Act 151](#) – Prevents the state from transferring federal dollars for family planning and health screening for poor and uninsured women to any group that provides abortions or has an affiliate that performs abortions, cutting \$3.5 million a year that the government pays to Planned Parenthood.