

Talking Points: August 2024 Constitutional Amendments

“VOTE NO” Topline Message:

- Right-wing members of the Wisconsin legislature have placed two misleading constitutional amendment questions on the August 2024 primary ballot. These amendments are designed to trick voters into eliminating checks and balances in our government. These amendments grab power from the governor and give the Legislature the “sole power” to distribute federal funds.
- Wisconsin’s legislature has been one of the least productive legislatures in the country and is too dysfunctional to be given sole power over federal funds. Once, we missed out on tens of millions of dollars waiting weeks for the legislature to pass what was required. And just this year the legislature blocked money to clean toxic chemicals from our water, and tried to block the way money could be spent to prevent hospitals from closing.
- Wisconsinites should not eliminate checks and balances in our government. Wisconsinites should NOT give the Legislature the “sole power” - **Vote NO on questions #1 and #2.**
- **Message for Democratic Voters:** MAGA Republicans in the state legislature have been trying to get an unfair advantage for years. They drew legislative district boundaries to give themselves unfair political power. They spent millions of taxpayer dollars to promote false election conspiracy theories. They voted to ban abortion against voters' wishes. And now they're scheming to grab the “sole power” to determine how to distribute federal funding in Wisconsin.

Background:

Right now the governor and the legislature must work together to decide how to distribute most federal funds in Wisconsin. But these two misleading Constitutional Amendments would actually strip power away from the governor and give the sole power to the legislature. Instead of the checks and balances we currently have, these confusing Amendments would be a political power grab, giving the legislature the sole power to decide how federal funds should be spent.

These constitutional amendments are misleading, risky and have unintended consequences that could create gridlock and delays in getting emergency funding to firefighters, police, and hospitals. These amendments would force delays in getting emergency relief to those who need it. Instead of the state being able to act quickly, funding would be tied up in the legislature and subject to partisan games and obstruction. These amendments also threaten the success of programs that support many families across the state. Funding for BadgerCare, food assistance programs for women and children, drug treatment and opioid response programs, and even cancer prevention programs could be delayed for months because of legislative gridlock.

Federal funds are essential for state agencies and programs to operate and support Wisconsinites. Adding restrictions on how these funds can be allocated, and subjecting them to partisan politics in the legislature, will jeopardize programs across agencies, including:

- **Jeopardizing Public Health:** The state receives federal funding to support BadgerCare recipients, mental health and drug treatment programs, cancer prevention programs, and local health departments who provide screening and health care services. If passed, payments to these programs could be delayed or even rejected altogether, threatening the health and well-being of many Wisconsinites.
- **Restricting Emergency Response:** Whether it's a pandemic or natural disaster, the state needs the ability to respond quickly in times of crisis. Legislative inaction could delay relief funds for small businesses, threaten our agricultural economy by jeopardizing our response to animal diseases like the avian flu, and delay relief payments to families.
- **Threatening Food Assistance Programs:** Federal funding is vital to food assistance programs, including SNAP and FoodShare. Delays in funding could lead to increased wait times for food assistance or threaten the availability of these programs altogether, including programs designed to support women, infants, and children in the state.
- **Delaying Infrastructure Projects and Road Construction:** Federal funding supports critical road and bridge projects led by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Delays in funding could disrupt planning and project schedules, potentially increasing costs and construction delays for key infrastructure projects across the state. These amendments could also make it more difficult for the state to compete for federal grants and receive funding for local projects.
- **Hurting Workers and Jeopardizing Employment Programs:** During the pandemic, federal funding supported expanded unemployment programs to support people who were laid off or unable to find work. These amendments would have prevented or delayed this funding and potentially threatened Wisconsin's economic recovery. Additional barriers to allocating federal aid could threaten other programs, including job training and apprenticeship services, and even services designed to help connect veterans with jobs.
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