



2023 State Budget Hearings

If you're unable to attend the hearings, you can also submit comments via an [online portal](#), or by email at budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov. Comments and emails are circulated to the entire Joint Finance Committee.

Wednesday, April 5, 2023
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Waukesha County Expo Center, Main Arena
1000 Northview Rd, Waukesha

Tuesday, April 11, 2023
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
UW-Eau Claire, Davies Student Center
Ojibwe Grand Ballroom (Third Floor)
77 Roosevelt Ave., Eau Claire

Wednesday, April 12, 2023
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Wilderness Resort, Glacier Canyon Conference Center
Sandstone Meeting Room
45 Hillman Road, Wisconsin Dells

Wednesday, April 26, 2023
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Lakeland Union High School
9573 State Highway 70, Minocqua

Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin Budget Priorities

We will send action alerts on these priorities and additional parts of the budget later.

Care for God's Creation

Support Budget items related to energy efficiency, PFAS, and adaptation to climate change via disaster planning.

- [Focus on Energy Issue Paper](#)
- [PFAS Issue Paper](#)
- [Adaptation to Climate Change Issue Paper](#)

Requests & Talking Points

Additional Resource: [Video of Speakers](#) from our March 21 Day of Advocacy

Driver Licenses for our Immigrant Neighbors

Background: Wisconsin once provided a pathway for our undocumented neighbors to obtain driver licenses. That changed in 2007. The federal Real ID Act was passed by Congress in 2005, enacting the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the Federal Government set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses. However, it was a state law that passed in 2006 and implemented in 2007 that unnecessarily prevented and continues to prevent many of our Wisconsin neighbors from driving.

Talking Points

- As a person of faith, I believe in helping families to thrive and have enough to eat. Many of our immigrant neighbors who want to work, take care of their families, and respond to emergencies for which they need to drive, are prevented from doing so. With the lack of sufficient mass transportation throughout our state, providing a way for Wisconsinites who do not qualify for a Real ID is the humane thing to do.

- Restoring driver licenses will put more money back into our economy. People with driver licenses are more likely to work and spend money. Currently, many of our farmers and other business owners are having difficulty finding employees. Up to 80% of Wisconsin's dairy workers are immigrants.
- Restoring driver licenses will reduce the number of uninsured drivers and result in lower insurance premiums for already-insured Wisconsin drivers.
- Restoring driver license access will make our roads safer as licensed drivers become more knowledgeable about traffic and road laws. According to the Colorado Fiscal Institute, since the state of New Mexico began issuing licenses in 2003, the rate of uninsured vehicles decreased by almost 24 percent, and traffic fatalities fell 23 percent.
- Please support expanding our ability as a state to provide a pathway for obtaining a driver license. There is a successful program in other states and in Wisconsin.

Resources

- Wisconsin Public Radio: ['Driver's licenses for all'](#)
- [Wisconsin Coalition for Safe Roads](#)
- [Voces de la Frontera](#)

Juvenile Justice

Background: Under the provisions of 1995 Wisconsin Act 27, 17-year-olds alleged to have violated criminal law are subject to prosecution as adults, and juveniles under the age of 17 can be tried as adults when they are alleged to have committed certain serious crimes. A judge in the adult court system can waive 17-year-olds into the juvenile justice system but they begin in the adult system. Since the law was enacted in 1996, 17-year-old youth have been classified as adults, but only in criminal court proceedings in Wisconsin. As Governor Evers has stated, “We are one of the only states in the nation that has not made this evidence-based change in ensuring that youth are treated as youth, and that needs to change now.”

Talking Points

- As a person of faith, I ask you to please support a criminal justice system that helps our young people to grow and thrive in society. Specifically, I ask that you support returning 17-year-old youth to the juvenile justice system instead of defaulting them into the adult court system regardless of their crime. There has been bipartisan support to make this happen in Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin is one of three states that automatically sends 17-year-old youth into the adult court system. The legislatures in the other two states, Georgia and Texas, are currently discussing proposed legislation to change that.
- There are mountains of evidence that 17-year-old youth who are treated as youth in our criminal justice systems are more likely to move beyond delinquency and successfully transition into adulthood.
- The juvenile justice system better addresses mental health or substance abuse challenges by mandating an individualized assessment, offering AODA treatment, and opening opportunities for counseling and other trauma-informed measures. These programs help break a cycle of incarceration and trauma among young people.
- Wisconsin has the second highest black-white incarceration disparity in the country, and reforming how we treat the youngest people in our criminal justice system could have compounding effects in reducing racial disparities across the board.

Resources

- [Raise the Age Coalition Website](#)
- WSAW-TV – [Governor Evers looks to return 17-year-olds to juvenile justice system](#)