



COVID-19 Spending

IN WISCONSIN

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Spend Transparently | Represent Everyone | Back to Work

THE PROBLEMS

Federal Spending: Responding to the costs of COVID-19, the federal government passed a series of large spending packages, much of which is to be managed at the state level.

Budget Surplus: \$3.2 billion is coming to Wisconsin, even though it has a \$2 billion surplus. So far, it seems the governor alone could decide what to do with this money.

Unemployment Bonuses: Wisconsinites receiving unemployment benefits are eligible for an extra bonus of \$300 per week—in addition to existing unemployment benefits.

TOP TAKEAWAYS

- Voters want transparency in how the money is spent.
- Voters want the legislature involved in the spending—no matter who the Governor is.
- There are too many job opportunities in Wisconsin to be paying people not to work.

MESSAGES WE HEARD

Who should decide on what the extra \$3.2 billion is spent?

- The governor should work together with the legislature to decide what to spend the money on, so all viewpoints and interests are involved.
- If the governor decides independently, money will go to Milwaukee and other big cities—not rural areas.
- If the governor decides independently, he will align the spending to his political party.

How should the extra \$3.2 billion be spent?

- Put the federal money into a separate pot, so the money is spent clearly.
- Mental health support—especially for students who have struggled the past year.
- Do not spend it on hiring more government employees nor raising government salaries.
- Recognizing cross-state occupational licenses—to bring more jobs to the state.

What do you think of the extra \$300 weekly unemployment bonuses?

- There are too many job opportunities for government to be paying people to stay home and not work.
- The unemployment system in Wisconsin needs to be restructured.
- The unemployment system needs to be temporary—right now it can be a lifestyle.
- People should not be able to live off the government as a lifestyle.

What do you think of COVID-19 government spending generally?

- I'm worried that the money is going to be wasted.
- I think the funding went more to bigger corporations who may not have needed it.
- Politicians don't have the constituents' best interests at heart.
- There are strings attached to federal government money, and that's worrisome.

What do you think of Governor Tony Evers' job dealing with the costs of COVID-19?

- Money has not been wisely spent by the Governor—especially in education.
- He overstepped his position with mask mandates—it's been a flip flop.
- I view Governor Evers as a follower and not a leader—I just have no respect for the man.
- Some counties had no COVID cases, but yet the mandates were for the whole state.

What do you think of the State Legislature's job dealing with the costs of COVID-19?

- I'm glad we have the legislature we do that was actually able to rein in the Governor.
- The legislature is elected by the people and the governor is elected by Madison and Milwaukee.