

Small Business Majority: Scientific opinion poll- Wisc. small business owners say government doesn't understand their concerns, need help with healthcare costs and other challenges

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Small firms in Wisconsin support a range of policies to address their needs, some of which might come as a surprise to their representatives

Madison, Wisc. — Policymakers at all levels use the problems small businesses face as a key talking point during political debates. But new opinion polling in Wisconsin reveals small business owners feel their government officials don't fully understand their challenges, and they support a wide array of policies to address their needs.

The survey, conducted by Chesapeake Beach Consulting on behalf of Small Business Majority found only 5% of Wisconsin small businesses feel their state and federal government officials have a strong understanding of their needs. The top three reasons why they feel government officials don't understand them are: they are too influenced by special interests, they primarily care about larger businesses and they don't take time to listen to or understand the views of business owners like them.

“Government needs to realize that when small businesses succeed the country succeeds,” said Todd Trotter, co-owner of Trotter Industries, LLC in Milwaukee. “While entrepreneurs do need some help to thrive, we are not looking for a handout. But what would help us as a small business is having affordable programs to invest in. We want to provide great healthcare options for our employees, and it should not have to take a significant portion of our revenue to do that. We also want to make sure our employees are growing professionally. Having these kinds of programs helps us retain employees and expand our business, but many small firms don’t have the money to provide these resources themselves.”

One example of how government officials may have misunderstood the needs of small businesses is the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. While the new tax law was billed as a win for small firms, only 33% of respondents report that the law has had a positive impact on their business.

Wisconsin small business owners identified several actions government could take to address the needs of small businesses like theirs. Respondents showed strong support for policies that would address healthcare affordability and access, including:

Increasing federal subsidies that help make healthcare more affordable for people who make under 400% of the federal poverty level (less than \$100,400 for a family of 4) (69% agree).

Requiring all individuals to maintain a basic level of health insurance (64% agree).

Expanding Medicaid coverage in the state to individuals whose incomes fall between current Medicaid levels and the minimum level for federal subsidies (70% agree).

Additionally, almost half of respondents (45%) feel access to capital is a problem for small businesses, and they support legislation that would address predatory practices in small business lending by requiring certain disclosures in small business loan products (78% support).

“Small business owners in Wisconsin want policymakers to listen to them and understand their concerns, and then act on them,” said Small Business Majority Midwest Outreach Manager Geraldine Sanchez Aglipay. “If Wisconsin officials want to support their state’s job creators, they must address barriers to entrepreneurship

and enact policies that will level the playing field for small firms.”

This poll reflects an Internet survey of 100 small business owners with 1-100 employees in Wisconsin, as part of a larger sample of 400 small business owners in four states (Illinois, Missouri, Virginia and Wisconsin).

For the full poll report, please visit:

<https://smallbusinessmajority.org/sites/default/files/research-reports/081419-WI-Small-Business-Policy-Solutions-Poll.pdf>