

# Our Wisconsin Revolution: Match the budget to the moment

Posted on Monday, Nov 30, 2020

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Today the co-chairs and executive director of the independent social justice group Our Wisconsin Revolution called on the Evers administration to address four dire threats to the state's health and welfare in the proposed 2021-23 state budget that will be presented to the legislature early next year.

In a [letter](#) to Governor Tony Evers and Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, the group suggests six ideas as centerpieces of a transformational state budget tackling challenges "even bigger than COVID-19," namely **economic inequality, health insecurity, social injustice** and **environmental insanity** that "already have created deep and crippling divisions and if left unaddressed will lead to Wisconsin's and America's certain and steady decline."



While Wisconsin needs to respond to the surging pandemic with more help for the unemployed and eviction prevention funding, for example, the group's letter stresses that "action is undeniably needed to start reversing the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands, cure what ails our sick health care system, arrest climate catastrophe, and come to terms with chronic and systemic injustices in our society."

Among the six proposals in the Motion W agenda are three policies—Medicaid expansion, increasing the state's minimum wage and legalizing marijuana—that have gained voter approval this year in ballot initiatives in battleground states and Republican strongholds across the country.

Marijuana legalization would strike a blow for racial justice by ending racially discriminatory criminal prosecution of nonviolent conduct related to the possession

and sale of marijuana, halting one cause of mass incarceration. It also would prompt new business start-ups in the form of dispensaries opening throughout the state, stimulate the economy and generate hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenue to fund health care access, broadband expansion and renewable energy investments.

Another way to fund the economic investments called for in Motion W is to make changes to the state's tax system that allows the wealthiest in Wisconsin to pay the lowest overall tax rate.



Wisconsin invented taxation based on ability to pay, creating the nation's first progressive income tax. Requiring the richest to pay their fair share again would help fund health care expansion and make it possible to pay for broadband expansion to close the digital divide that plagues low-income and rural communities. It also makes it possible to invest in the development of renewable energy, a sector of the economy that has been creating jobs [12 times faster](#) than the rest of the economy.

“The next state budget should invest in tomorrow's economy, not stand pat with yesterday's economy. Wisconsin's goal should be solar panels on every roof. And now more than ever, when we're in the midst of this pandemic, we need to bring high-speed Internet to every doorstep and we need to make sure everyone can get health care. For that to happen, we need a state budget that rises to the occasion,” Our Wisconsin Revolution director Mike McCabe said.