

# Badger Institute: Launches mandate for Madison

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Policy blueprint will cover range of issues with contributions from leading experts, partners

Feb. 21, 2022 – The Badger Institute today announced partnerships with several leading research organizations and subject matter experts who will contribute to its Mandate for Madison, a policy roadmap for the governor and Legislature that will be released throughout 2022 and early 2023. The Mandate will focus on a wide range of policy issues including K12 education reform, pro-growth tax reform, free-market health care options, workforce participation, welfare reform, infrastructure, early childhood education and more. The project will be overseen by Badger Institute Policy Director Patrick McIlheran.

“We’re pursuing an ambitious agenda that, if adopted, will make Wisconsin one of the best places in America to live, work and do business,” said Mike Nichols, president of the Badger Institute. “We’re proud to have pulled together some of the best minds in the state and the country to create this agenda, and more will be added in the coming months.”

Research topics and partners will include:

**K-12 School Reform** – Building on a 30-year legacy of providing groundbreaking research and reform ideas in the areas of K-12 education and school choice, the Badger Institute will examine ways to allow parents to identify and select the best educational options for their children. The Institute has contracted with longtime school choice leader [Jim Bender](#) to serve as an education consultant and will also partner with likeminded groups in the state including School Choice Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, AFP-WI and others.

**Infrastructure** – An assessment of Wisconsin’s transportation needs and funding options will be conducted by [Robert Poole](#), director of transportation policy at the Reason Foundation. Poole is one of the foremost experts on infrastructure in the country and has worked for years with the Badger Institute on transportation policy.

**Healthcare** – Research and analysis related to health care reform will be spearheaded by [David Balat](#), director of the Right on Healthcare initiative at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, [Daniel Sem](#), Director of the Rx Think Tank at Concordia University Wisconsin, and [Scott Niederjohn](#), economist and director of the Free Enterprise Center at Concordia. Sem is author of “[Purple Solutions: A Bipartisan Roadmap to Better Healthcare in America](#).” The Institute will also partner with the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty on related health care projects.

**Corrections and Crime** – With the twin goals of enhancing public safety and getting more people into the workforce, the Institute will examine crime levels throughout the state, how best to bring them down and reduce recidivism. This part of the Mandate will include analysis of both the prosecution and defense sides of the justice system. Americans for Prosperity Senior Policy Analyst [Jeremiah Mosteller](#) will compare numbers of prosecutors and state public defenders in Wisconsin as well as their compensation to those in other states and to public and private-sector legal positions in Wisconsin.

**Taxes** – The Mandate will build on the Badger Institute’s [previous work](#), providing an array of tax reform options designed to make Wisconsin’s tax structure more fair, simple and competitive. The Badger Institute has long championed an array of pro-growth tax reform options.

**Early education/Poverty/Workforce/Welfare** – [Angela Rachidi](#), senior fellow and Rowe Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, will examine effective early learning frameworks for children, especially those living in poverty. Rachidi will also research antipoverty approaches that focus on helping families escape poverty and achieve permanent self-reliance.

**Unemployment Insurance** – [Ike Brannon](#), president of Capital Policy Analytics, will examine whether federal unemployment insurance benefits slowed employment growth in Wisconsin, and recommend the best ways going forward to structure UI so that those truly in need quickly get back into the labor force without becoming dependent on government payments.

**Federalism** – The Mandate will include an ongoing analysis of federal COVID relief funds that have poured into the state since the crisis began. The Tracking the Trillions project will be overseen by veteran journalist [Mark Lisher](#) who will investigate how and where the money is being spent. The Institute will continue to make the case for greater transparency and less reliance on federal monies.

Research, reporting and other content related to the Mandate will be published throughout 2022 and early 2023. Other partnerships will be announced as they develop.