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## No Appetite for Right-to-Work in Wisconsin

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Anna Greenberg and Missy Egelsky

Recent polling<sup>1</sup> in Wisconsin indicates that 4 years of fighting over issues like collective bargaining and Right-to-Work in Wisconsin and neighboring states has made voters wary of lawmakers pushing new proposals impacting Wisconsin workers. Right-to-Work legislation falls to the bottom of the list of priorities for Governor Scott Walker and legislators. More importantly, a bare majority supports the idea of Right-to-Work laws at its highest point—without any information about the proposal—and that support falls quickly with balanced messaging on both sides of the debate.

The following are key findings from the poll of 600 registered voters in Wisconsin:

- **Voters do not want Governor Walker and legislators to allow Right-to-Work to distract them from more important priorities.** Just 4 percent of voters select Right-to-Work legislation as a top priority for this year. Instead, voters want the Governor and lawmakers to focus on improving public schools, growing the economy, and increasing wages for Wisconsin workers.

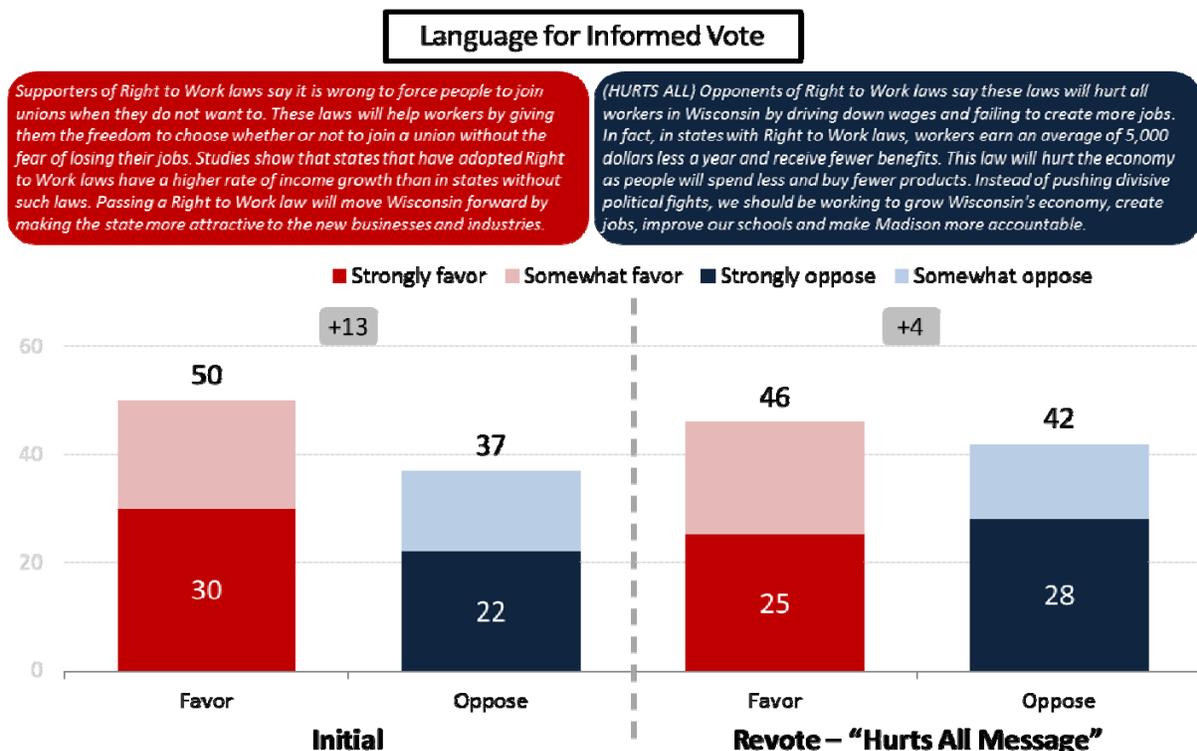
### ■ **Figure 1:** Priorities for Governor Walker and the State Legislature

<i>Which two of the following do you believe should be the most important priorities for Governor Walker and the State Legislature when they begin the legislative session next year?</i>	<b>Total</b>
Improve public schools	36
Attract jobs and grow the economy	34
Raise the average income of Wisconsin workers	18
Rebuild Wisconsin's roads, bridges and infrastructure	17
Make health care more affordable and available	16
Shrink the size of state government and cut government spending	15
Cut state income tax	9
Cut local property taxes	9
Eliminate the state budget deficit	8
Pass right to work legislation	4

<sup>1</sup> Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a survey among 600 registered voters in Wisconsin between December 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014. The interviews were conducted among both landline and cell phone users. The data is subject to a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

- Wisconsin voters strongly believe that Right-to-Work laws distract from priorities like creating jobs and improving schools rather than helping them.** Fifty-seven percent of voters—including majorities of voters in every region of the state—say that Right-to-Work legislation takes away from the issues that are most important to Wisconsin; just 33 percent think these laws will help Wisconsin get back on track.
- Tepid support for Right-to-Work legislation falls sharply after balanced information on the proposal.** With a neutral description of Right-to-Work legislation<sup>2</sup>, support achieves just a bare 50 percent majority, with 37 percent who oppose and another 13 percent who are uncertain. However, once voters hear balanced information on both sides of the issue, support for Right-to-Work legislation drops sharply, with a majority who oppose (42 percent) or are uncertain (11 percent) about the proposal compared to 46 percent who support the legislation. Voters respond to arguments against Right-to-Work laws that highlight the negative economic impact for workers in Right-to-Work states, including lower overall wages and a weaker economy; an argument in support of the law focuses on worker freedom and making Wisconsin attractive to new business.

■ **Figure 2:** Right to Work Initial and Post Informed Vote



Wisconsin voters clearly do not want Right-to-Work to be on the agenda at all right now, and they understand that this is legislation that will hurt, not help, Wisconsin workers and the state's economy.

<sup>2</sup> The initial question states: As you may know, a Right-To-Work law says that no company or union can negotiate a contract that requires workers to join a union, or pay fees to a union, as a condition of employment. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose adopting a Right-To-Work law in Wisconsin?