

The Wisconsin Homeowners Alliance (WHA) is a 501(c)(4) organization dedicated to representing the interests of Wisconsin homeowners and protecting Wisconsin's quality of life one home at a time. As part of this effort, the WHA conducts a series of statewide public opinion surveys designed to help us understand what homeowners are thinking and talking about. This monthly publication is intended to share issues of importance and concern to homeowners with decision makers around the state.

HOME OWNERSHIP Every homeowner knows from experience that the advantages of owning a home come with responsibilities for routine maintenance and major repairs. These days, however, homeowners are more engaged with such projects than in the past—and in Wisconsin, they're eager to prepare themselves for new construction and remodeling challenges.

Nationwide, spending on home improvements significantly outpaced inflation last year, reaching \$149.5 billion, according to data from Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies. In Wisconsin, the topics of home improvements and projects that add value to a home ranked as two of the top three choices when people were asked to identify subjects they would like to read more about. Overall, 32 percent of the respondents say they are most interested in information about home improvements. One person in six (16%) first looks for information that can add value to a home. One-fourth of all respondents express an interest in information about property taxes and fees.

Perhaps it's not surprising given the success of TV programs highlighting various home projects, but men and women now display an equal desire to learn more about home improvements. In addition, younger residents between the ages of 18 and 34 and those between 35 and 54 express more interest in remodeling projects than older residents.

EDUCATION Statewide, nearly three-quarters of the residents (72%) believe that the quality of the public schools represents an important change in their communities. This belief is widespread among men and women of all ages and income levels.

At the same time, men are more positive in their assessment of these changes than women are. More than half of men (59%) who believe that changes in the quality of their public schools have been significant, say these changes have made their communities better. By comparison, slightly less than half of women (48%) who believe educational changes have been significant think those changes have made their communities better.

HOMEOWNER SATISFACTION TRENDS	
	<p>HOME OWNERSHIP Homeowners are familiar with the responsibility that comes with owning a home and are interested in obtaining more information about home improvements and remodeling projects.</p>
	<p>EDUCATION Wisconsin residents agree that changes have occurred in the quality of public schools and there is slight disagreement among groups whether the changes are for the better or worse.</p>
	<p>THE ECONOMY Men and women in Wisconsin also differ slightly in opinion about the positive or negative effects of changes in employment and job opportunities.</p>
	<p>TAXES Respondents across the state continue to indicate taxes as a number one concern for Wisconsin.</p>



THE ECONOMY

The changing nature of the jobs we do and the employment opportunities in Wisconsin also rank among the most important changes people are experiencing. In addition, half of all respondents (55%) agree strongly that the loss of jobs and figuring out how to attract new businesses is one of the most important issues facing people like them. Here again, men and women differ in their assessments of the benefits and problems associated with these changes.

Forty-five percent of men who view changes in job and employment opportunities as important, say those changes have been positive, while fewer than one in three (29%) think job and employment changes have made things in their communities worse. On the other hand, just 37 percent of women who see changing jobs and employment opportunities as important, think those changes have improved life in their communities and an almost equal number (35%) say those changes have made things worse.

TAXES

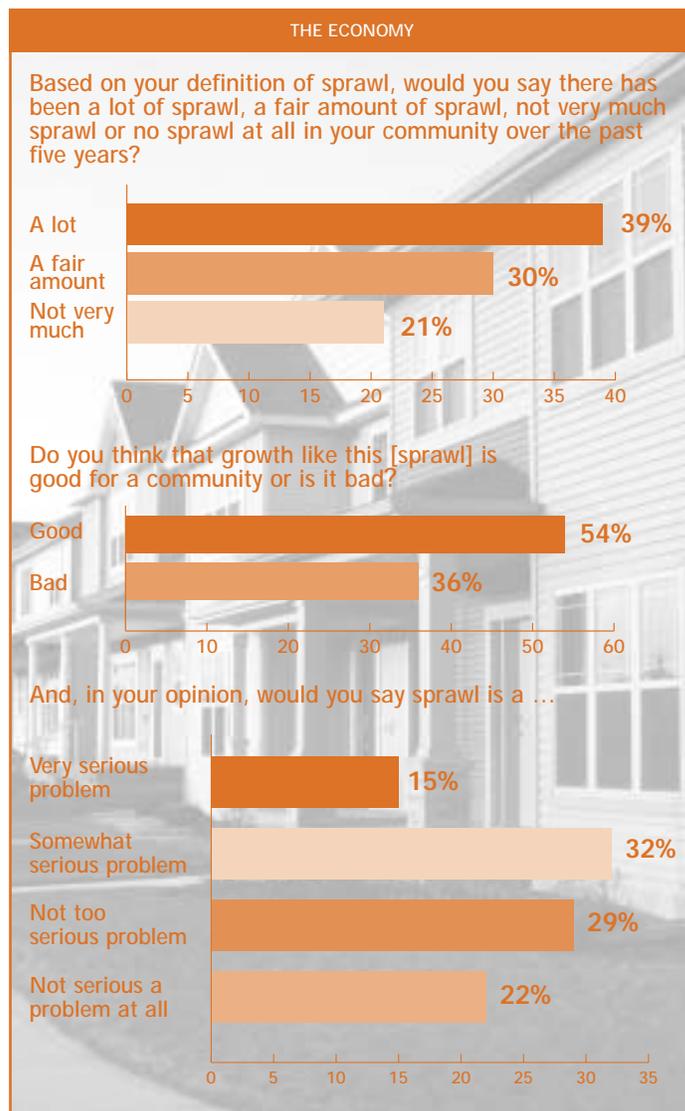
Across Wisconsin and the rest of the nation, taxes generate the most consistent complaints, but are some demographic groups in the state more attuned to tax issues than others? The answer is yes, but neither age nor gender alone accurately predicts the intensity of concern over tax issues.

For example, while 64 percent of state residents overall agree strongly that “government spending and the amount we have to pay for taxes” is one of the most important issues facing people, men ages 35 to 54 express the strongest opinions on the topic, with 70 percent in strong agreement. On the other hand, figuring out how to pay for our public schools is a top issue for more than eight out of 10 respondents regardless of age, income or gender.

HEALTH CARE

In this Wisconsin Homeowners Alliance survey, respondents express support for many changes they see occurring in their communities, but they are also very concerned about others. Health care is one of the top issues of concern. Statewide, virtually all respondents (94%) agree that “getting spiraling health care and insurance costs under control” is one of the most important issues facing people like them.

Moreover, among all of the issues tested—health care and health insurance costs, government spending and taxes, loss



of jobs and funding public schools—health care and health insurance costs prompted the greatest concern. While 78 percent of respondents agree strongly that controlling health care costs is one of the most important issues facing people like them, 64 percent agree strongly that government spending and taxes is one of the most important issues.

People with incomes between \$20,000 and \$59,999 are most strongly concerned about the cost of health care (84% agree strongly) as are women over age 35, where 83 percent agree strongly.

The Summer 2006 Wisconsin Homeowners Alliance Survey interviewed 600 randomly selected Wisconsin residents statewide between May 2 and May 8, 2006. The results are an accurate reflection of the opinions of Wisconsin residents within a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

The Wisconsin Homeowners Alliance is a 501(c)(4) organization dedicated to representing the interests of Wisconsin homeowners and protecting Wisconsin's quality of life one home at a time.