

## Wisconsin Citizens Are Invited to Make Their Voices Heard on Abortion and Family Well-Being

*Citizen Solutions initiative encourages people statewide to weigh in on policy proposals co-created by 14 Wisconsinites with widely different views on abortion*

**April 24, 2024** — Today, [Citizen Solutions](#), a national civic experiment that gives citizens the power to co-create solutions to divisive issues, comes to Wisconsin. Through May 31, people statewide are invited to visit [www.citizensolutions.us/wi](http://www.citizensolutions.us/wi) and weigh in on five consensus-based proposals that address some of the root causes of abortion and support women, children, and families.

The call to participate provides citizens with a way to take action following a state legislative session where many priorities, including an extension of postpartum Medicaid coverage and a 12-week paid family leave program, [went largely unaddressed](#). The citizen-authored proposals are being unveiled as leaders [keep close watch](#) on a decision from the Wisconsin Supreme Court regarding the legality of a 19th century law prohibiting abortions and as citizen-led efforts to codify abortion gain momentum nationwide.

Fourteen Wisconsinites (the “WI14”) from across the state, including Milwaukee, Rock, Chippewa, Door, Brown, Grant, and Dane counties, and who have a wide range of experiences with and views on abortion, set out to demonstrate just how problematic the overly binary, simplistic conversation on abortion has become. They created the following proposals as a way of proving that common ground solutions are possible when we collaborate across lines of difference:

- Require “human development” education that is comprehensive, medically accurate, and developmentally appropriate
- Require pro-life pregnancy resource centers, abortion providers, and all other prenatal care providers to provide standardized, medically accurate “all options” information to those accessing their services
- Extend public health insurance (Medicaid) postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months
- Provide a fully refundable state child tax credit
- Enact paid family leave, including for foster and adoptive parents

The proposals aim to empower and support those making decisions about their reproductive health and family planning. A vision statement crafted by the unlikely allies reads, in part, “We agree that the circumstances surrounding abortion are rarely simple. As a society, we should strive to minimize the number of unwanted pregnancies while treating those who find themselves with an unwanted pregnancy with compassion and support regardless of the choice they make.”

The WI14 created the proposals at a [three-day “solution session”](#) facilitated by [Convergence Center for Policy Resolution](#). Together, they explored common values, built a shared understanding of the complexity of the issue, and broke down stereotypes to develop solutions that integrate many views. Once they receive public feedback, the WI14 will mobilize to ensure lawmakers know where the public stands and to encourage them to prioritize problem-solving over partisanship for the good of Wisconsin’s families.

Of her experiences at the session, participant Kai Gardner Mishlove, Executive Director of Jewish Social Services, said, “We don’t know each other’s battles, histories, or experiences, and we don’t often get to walk in other people’s shoes. Our goal was to come together on shared experiences and figure out a way to work together for the common good.”

Participant Jeff Davis, a pro-life advocate, said, “While my beliefs on the sanctity and protection of all human life have not changed, my experience with attendees who think much differently than I do has increased my compassion for what mothers go through and helped me realize that this issue has a lot of complexities.”

Wisconsin is the second state to participate in *Citizen Solutions*, which was piloted in Tennessee on the issue of gun rights and safety. During that public feedback period, more than 30,000 Tennesseans weighed in on eight proposals, and five majority-supported proposals were ultimately brought to the state legislature.

“Americans want policy solutions over political stalemates,” said Ashley Phillips, Head of Programs at Starts With Us Builders. “As the national conversation around abortion continues, we encourage Wisconsinites to weigh in on these proposals created by citizens who, despite the polarization that surrounds them, had the courage to think outside of the binary box usually associated with this issue.”

*Citizen Solutions* was launched in response to a national poll that found 82% of Republicans and 80% of Democrats think it’s important for citizens to be [involved in finding solutions](#) to the country’s problems. Both sides, however, are skeptical that political leaders share this desire, with only 29% of Republicans and 27% of Democrats saying that addressing the needs of constituents is important to elected officials.

To learn more about *Citizen Solutions* go to [www.citizensolutions.us](http://www.citizensolutions.us) and to show support for or against the proposals, visit [www.citizensolutions.us/wj](http://www.citizensolutions.us/wj).

### *About Citizen Solutions*

*Citizen Solutions* is a project of [Starts With Us Builders](#), a national, nonpartisan movement equipping Americans to overcome toxic polarization and extremist thinking to solve our toughest problems. Starts With Us Builders does this by illuminating the causes and effects of toxic polarization, demonstrating the power of citizens working together across lines of difference, and activating Americans from all walks of life with the skills to become more effective problem solvers. In addition to more than three million followers, Starts With Us Builders is supported by

more than 250 ideologically diverse leaders across sectors from business, entertainment, academia, faith, sports, journalism, technology, and national defense. It is a project of Builders Network, Inc.

*About Convergence Center for Policy Resolution*

Convergence is the leading organization bridging divides to solve critical issues through collaborative problem-solving across ideological, political, and cultural divisions. For a decade and a half, Convergence has brought together leaders, doers, and experts to build trusting relationships, identify breakthrough solutions, and form unlikely alliances for constructive consensus-based change on seemingly intractable issues. Convergence's process is improving the lives of Americans and strengthening democracy for a more resilient and collaborative future. Learn more at [www.ConvergencePolicy.org](http://www.ConvergencePolicy.org).