

# WI BALLOT REFERENDUM

AUGUST 13, 2024

POLICY BRIEF

**On August 13th, 2024, Wisconsinites will be asked two important questions on the state primary ballot that could change our state constitution!**

## WHAT IS THE AUGUST 13 BALLOT REFERENDUM?

On the August 13 state primary ballot voters will be asked if the Wisconsin constitution should be changed to prevent the governor from spending federal dollars without the approval of the WI State Legislature.

These potential changes will impact both the process for distributing federal money, and who has the power to make those decisions. These large sweeping changes will impact a wide range of issues voters care about, from education to the environment to how quickly the government can respond to emergencies (like a public health crisis or a natural disaster).

**The Wisconsin Farmers Union opposes these amendments to our State Constitution and is deeply aware that this amendment, if passed, will be harmful to the people of our state.**

**We urge you to VOTE NO on both questions.**



## HOW WILL THE REFERENDUM QUESTIONS APPEAR ON THE BALLOT?

**Question 1: "Delegation of appropriation power.** Shall section 35 (1) of article IV of the constitution be created to provide that the legislature may not delegate its sole power to determine how moneys shall be appropriated?"

**Question 2: "Allocation of federal moneys.** Shall section 35 (2) of article IV of the constitution be created to prohibit the governor from allocating any federal moneys the governor accepts on behalf of the state without the approval of the legislature by joint resolution or as provided by legislative rule?"

## WHAT DOES A 'YES' OR 'NO' VOTE MEAN?

A **'YES'** vote supports amending the state constitution to require legislative approval from both the senate and assembly before the governor can spend federal money.

**(MORE RED TAPE)**

A **'NO'** vote opposes this amendment, allowing the governor to accept and allocate federal funds swiftly, without needing approval from the state legislature.

***SAY NO TO MORE RED TAPE!***

## BACKGROUND ON THE BALLOT REFERENDUM

Early in our State's history, our State Legislature had sole power to determine how all the money WI received from the federal government would be allocated and spent.

Then, during the Great Depression, emergency relief funding needed to be distributed quickly. Wisconsinites needed their tax dollars to be returned quickly, and action needed to be taken swiftly.

The governor was granted authority to accept and distribute dollars from the federal government, on behalf of the legislature at this juncture.

This executive power continues to exist today, giving the governor the ability to distribute relief dollars for natural disasters, aid to food shelters, federal loan funding, and American Rescue Plan dollars in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (among many other things!), without contending with the infighting and gridlock in the Wisconsin legislature.



## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO VOTE 'NO'

### DISASTER RELIEF

Imagine during a natural disaster, like a flood, when communities desperately need immediate relief. These amendments would delay essential aid—like food, shelter, medicine, and loans, that people depend on to get by when bad luck strikes.

## CLIMATE

Since 2011, Wisconsin has made little progress on climate action and clean energy -due to blockages from the State Legislature and previous governor. The amendment could put us further behind. Many of the new investments in President Biden's Affordable Clean Energy Plan are being developed as grants from the federal government. We need those dollars to come into WI!

## ACCOUNTABILITY

It's easier for voters to hold the governor accountable for spending federal funds than it is to hold the entire legislature responsible. We collectively elect the governor and they represent every Wisconsinite equally. The governor, regardless of party affiliation, should retain this responsibility to ensure transparency and accountability. The Governor is allowed to declare a state of emergency and provide government resources -- let's not remove the ability for them to respond to problems quickly.

## OUR WORK, OUR MEMBERS

Within the last few years, the Wisconsin Farmers Union has benefited from local food purchasing dollars disrupted by the Department of Agriculture in the form of a grant from the federal government creating the Local Food Purchase Assistance program (LFPA). Many WFU members also benefited from emergency meat processing dollars allocated amid the COVID 19 pandemic.

**NO MORE RED TAPE.**  
**VOTE NO X2 ON AUGUST 13!**



Learn more at [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)  
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