



Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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Message from the Director

Greetings from the Thompson Center! We've been energetic again this year. The Center brought policymakers and researchers together at conferences to examine how we can create more effective public leaders, how we can reform Wisconsin's prison re-entry policies and how we can modernize the state's transportation funding and policies. We provided nearly half a million dollars in research grants to faculty across the UW-System to analyze these same topics. The Center hosted influential speakers, including Karl Rove and David Axelrod at UW-Green Bay; Kelly Ayotte and Donna Brazille at UW-Milwaukee, Ramez Naam at UW-Stevens Point, and former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and attorney Dean Strang at UW-Madison. Most recently, we worked with the Wisconsin Women in Government to bring in national pollster Kristen Soltis Anderson to discuss voters today.

You can expect continued good things from the Thompson Center. Next year, we will host major events—and fund faculty research—on three issues: improving independence for Wisconsin's disabled population, Wisconsin's role in biomedical research, and Wisconsin's energy future. We've begun podcasting and already interviewed Governor Thompson, Lt. Governor Kleefisch, and national political strategist Mike Murphy. In October, we will host former American Enterprise Institute president Arthur Brooks to discuss his book, *Love Your Enemies*. And on September 20, 2019, we're hosting a conference on the Founding Fathers. Former Second Lady of the United States **Lynne Cheney** will be our keynote speaker!

We're working hard to bring people together to tackle some of Wisconsin's biggest problems. And we invite you to join us. On Wisconsin!

Ryan J. Owens, J.D., Ph.D.

2018-2019 Events

Effective Public Leadership

On November 30, we invited some of the best scholars on lawmaking and leadership to discuss their findings with current and former policymakers. One panel examined the skills legislators need to pass legislation more effectively. Another panel investigated how political leaders can use and abuse their powers to motivate citizens. Researchers presented their findings and policymakers responded with their thoughts about how the research reflects the real world of governing. Pollster Charles Franklin treated the audience to an excellent presentation of Wisconsin's recent voting trends. Conference attendees learned about modern legislative behavior and leadership success.



Second Chances & Prisoner Reentry in Wisconsin

On March 7, we held a conference on prisoner re-entry. We examined Governor Thompson's idea to offer employable skills to appropriate non-violent prisoners. Our analyses showed a \$40-100 million saving to taxpayers. Under the proposal, soon-to-be-released offenders would undergo rehabilitation programs and then undertake concentrated vocational training over the course of 6-12 months. Prisoners could be trained to be welders, HVAC technicians, plumbers, or a myriad of other vocations. They would depart prison with skills to obtain employment and contribute to society immediately upon leaving. Policymakers on the left and right agreed that reforming prison re-entry in Wisconsin would not only save money and reduce recidivism, it would also help fill jobs and inspire people. Over three hundred people in attendance agreed that this would be a worthwhile bipartisan endeavor.



Transportation Reform in Wisconsin

On April 26, we gathered at the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee to examine a host of issues relating to Wisconsin's transportation problems. With a keynote discussion from Secretary Craig Thompson, we discussed what policymakers must do to fund and address our growing transportation needs. Tommy Thompson was in attendance and reminded us that there are no Republican roads or Democrat highways, and urged policymakers to work together.



Thanks To Our 2018-2019 Speakers

Karl Rove and David Axelrod

UW-Green Bay

Kelly Ayotte and Donna Brazille

UW-Milwaukee

Mike Murphy

UW-Madison

Austin Channing Brown

UW-Superior

Ramez Naam

UW-Stevens Point

Judge Alberto Gonzales and Dean Strang

UW-Madison

Jonah Goldberg

UW-Parkside

John McCormack

UW-La Crosse

Charlie Sykes

UW-Parkside

Hon. Judge Jeffrey Sutton

UW-Madison

Kristen Soltis Anderson

Wisconsin Women in Government

Upcoming Events

The Founding Fathers and Public Leadership

Keynote: Mrs. Lynne Cheney

September 20, 2019

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Pyle Center

Madison, WI

The Founding Fathers had a lot to say about leaders and leadership. We should listen to them. This conference brings together some of the foremost scholars on the Founding Fathers. They will examine what public leadership meant to them and how we might learn from them today. Former Second Lady of the United States Lynne Cheney will provide the keynote address.

Improving Independence for Wisconsin's Disabled Population

The Center will host a series of events across the state and throughout the year to discuss how we can increase independence among Wisconsin's physically and cognitively disabled populations. We will examine policies that will empower them to live independently, to join the workforce, and to take on greater leadership roles in their communities.

Biomedical Research in Wisconsin

The Center will host a conference to examine the policies Governor Thompson introduced to move Wisconsin to the front of the line in biomedical research, and what leaders can do today to keep Wisconsin on the right track. We will examine the administrative obstacles that prevent UW discoveries from being used efficiently to drive innovations in biotechnology and the medical industry. We will learn how to best place Wisconsin at the cutting edge of research.

Energy Reform in Wisconsin

The Center will host conference events across Wisconsin in the coming year to address areas where the state can reform its energy policy. We will examine private companies that have taken the lead on this issue as well as areas of policy that need to be changed to enhance Wisconsin's innovative homegrown energy resources.

Love Your Enemies

In October, the Center will host former American Enterprise Institute president Arthur Brooks to discuss his new book, *Love Your Enemies*.

Thompson Center Staff

Eric Tempelis



Eric Tempelis is the Assistant Director of the Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership. His career includes roles in local, state and federal government, most recently as a prosecutor. Eric formerly served as a government affairs director, president of a statewide association, and staff member in the Offices of Wisconsin Governor Scott McCallum and U.S. Health & Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. Eric earned a Certificate in Integrated Liberal Studies, BA, MPA, and JD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As a law student, he was selected as a general editor of the annual National Symposium of the Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy. He is a former member and rank leader in the Wisconsin Marching Band.

Michael Knaak



Michael Knaak is the Administrative Assistant of the Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership. Michael attended Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin and graduated with a Bachelor of the Arts degree in December, 2017. His areas of study included political science, economics, international relations and security, graphic design, religion, and western heritage. Michael's research has focused on a number of thorny domestic and international topics, and he has presented his work on the interplay between sanctions and nuclear proliferation at a national conference.

The Thompson Center on Social Media!

Follow us on Twitter at **@thompson_center**, on Facebook at **@TThompsonCenter**, and on Instagram at **@thompson_center**. And check out our website for current **podcasts** and an updated list of events and speakers: <https://thompsoncenter.wisc.edu/>.

Wisconsin's New Political Landscape

On November 6, 2018, Wisconsin voters used their electoral brushes to paint a new political landscape. For the first time since 2008, Wisconsin has divided government. With a Democrat Governor and a Republican legislature, many people wonder whether the state can accomplish any substantive policy reform in the next four years. The answer is yes. There are issues on which the parties can and should work together.

Criminal justice reform is one issue tailor made for bipartisan reform. Red states and blue states across the country have improved their criminal justice systems. Wisconsin can do the same. The Center commissioned a cost benefit analysis to examine the feasibility of turning an existing correctional facility into a jobs training site for appropriate, non-violent offenders. Our goal was to investigate whether Wisconsin could adopt this policy, add to the workforce, and maintain public safety. The results suggested that this initiative could do all of the above and save taxpayers up to \$100 million. The Thompson Center recently hosted a major conference on prisoner reentry too, in part, discuss these findings. This is an idea that should gain bipartisan support.

Republicans and Democrats also can work together to increase independence for Wisconsin's disabled population. The disabled population in our state is chronically unemployed and underemployed. We can adopt policies to help match disabled adults with jobs that utilize their unique abilities. We can create policies that help disabled individuals take on greater leadership roles in their communities. Together, Republicans and Democrats can devise ways to improve the lives of these disabled people, help them to obtain work, and enhance their dignity. We must work with researchers and policymakers to investigate how to merge the interests of the employment community with the disabled community and make everyone better off.

Transportation reform is another area where Republicans and Democrats should be able to find common ground. As Governor Thompson declared at our conference: "There aren't Democratic roads or Republican highways in our state. The roads and bridges of Wisconsin are ours, an essential investment for the ongoing prosperity and continued safety of our state." We all know Wisconsin needs a transportation overhaul. Tommy was able to work with Democrats on this issue. Our current leaders must similarly work together.

Finally, Republicans and Democrats should work together to adopt common sense energy reforms. Wisconsin is the Dairy State. Our cows produce manure that we can turn into abundant energy. Why do we not have manure digesters across the state? We are blessed with home grown energy sources right here in Wisconsin and should take advantage of that. We can be the masters of our own energy fates. But we will need to work together to do it.

Wisconsin has always lead. It's in our Badger-red blood to lead. If the parties address these issues, and provide one another—and us—a square deal, Wisconsin will be in good shape.