

# CAPITOL OPINION

*polling & research*

- Providing **Accurate Information** for **Strategic Decisions**



## TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT: Public Opinion & Political Will

Presentation for the TDA 2006 Annual Meeting

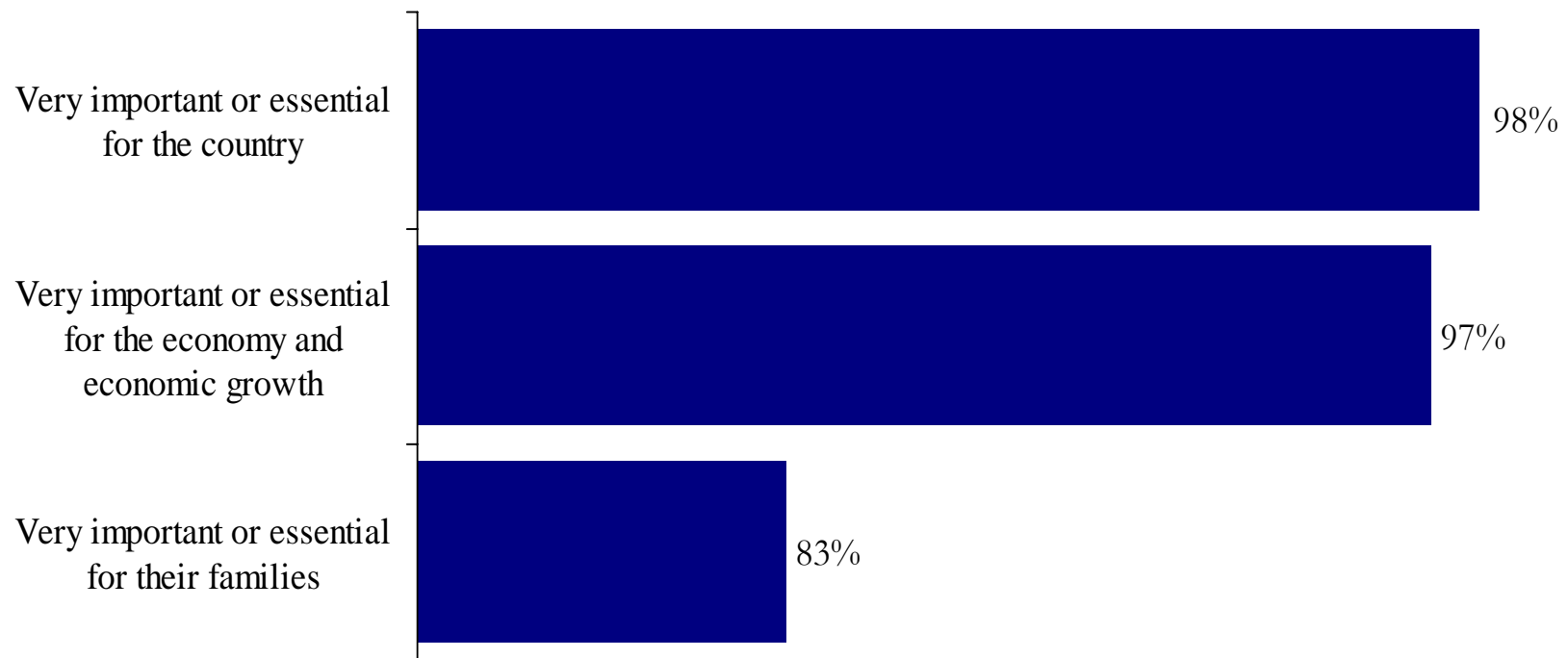
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## Americans overwhelmingly understand the importance of the transportation infrastructure

Harris Interactive Poll (Feb 2006)

How would you rate the importance of good transportation system for the country, the economy and economic growth, and for your family?



## Transportation is viewed as key to economy, quality of life, and future

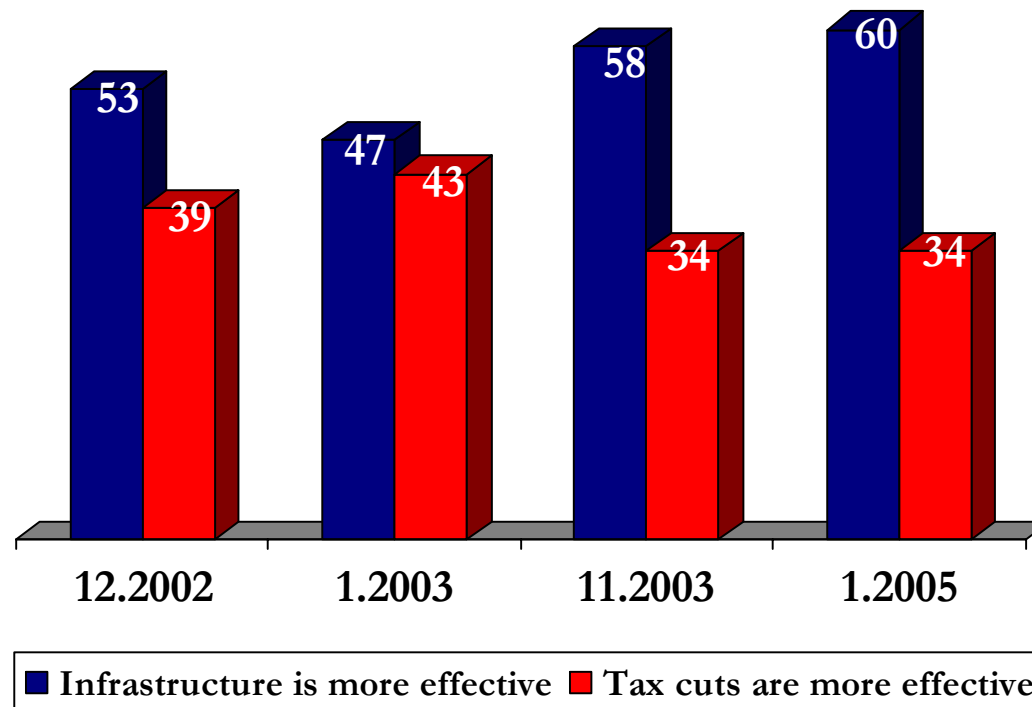
Zogby national poll (2003) – nine out of ten agree that “we need to start making greater transportation investments today in order to ensure that our children and grandchildren do not face even more serious transportation problems 20 years from now”

WisDOT Wisconsin poll (2004) – eight out of ten agree that having well maintained roads was very important to the quality of life

Capitol Opinion Wisconsin focus groups (2006) – virtually all participants agree that transportation is vital to the state’s economy (“roads drive Wisconsin”)

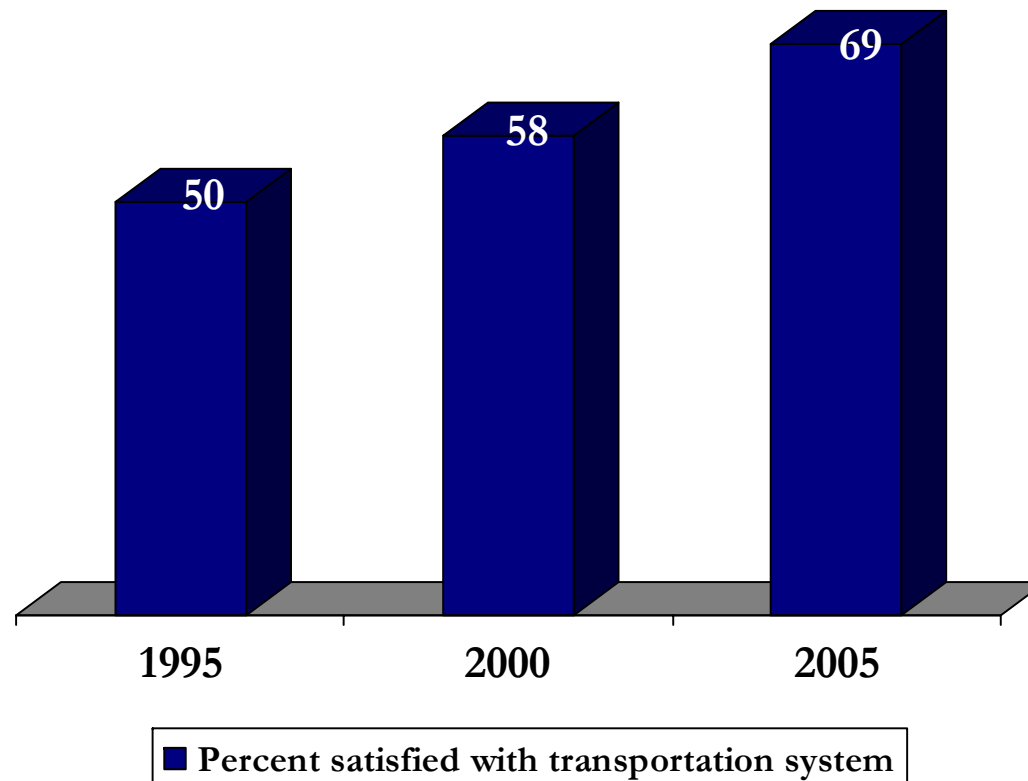
## Increase in belief that investing in infrastructure is better than tax cuts at stimulating the economy

Los Angeles Times Poll: Which do you think is more effective in stimulating the nation's economy: an economic agenda focused on returning money to taxpayers through tax cuts, or an economic agenda focused on spending for improvements to the country's infrastructure such as roads, bridges and schools?



## Nationwide increase in satisfaction with roads, with greatest satisfaction in West and Midwest

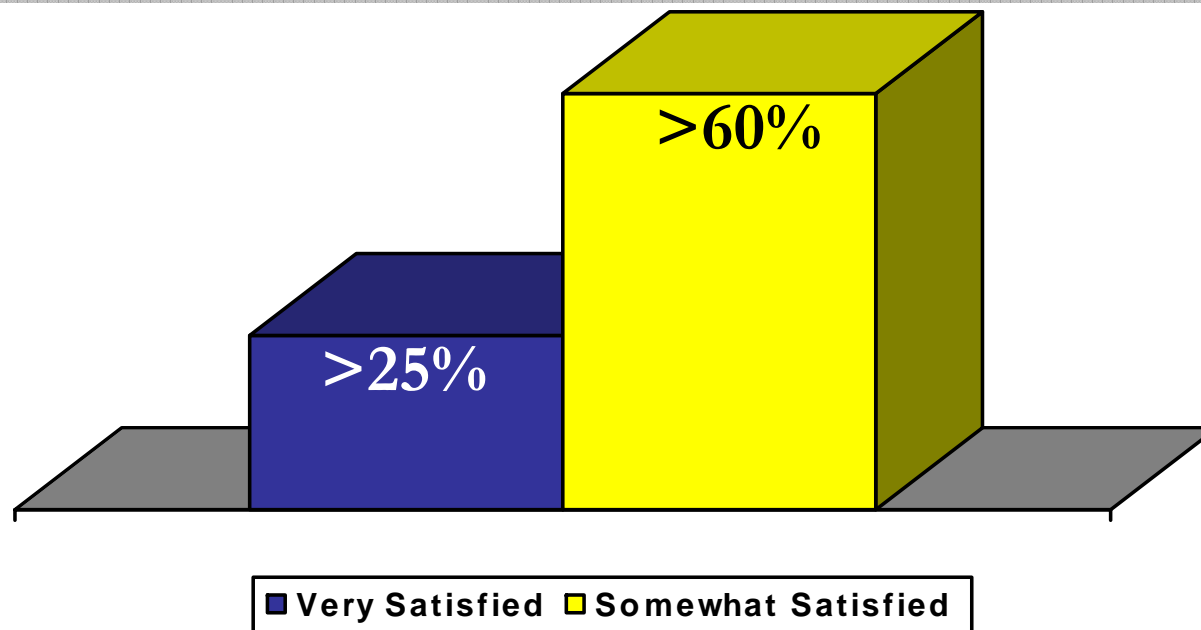
Federal Highway Administration: 2005 Traveler Opinion and Perceptions Survey (TOP)  
Please rate your overall satisfaction with the transportation system...are you highly satisfied, satisfied, neutral, or dissatisfied?



## In 2004, over a quarter of Wisconsinites were very satisfied with state's overall transportation system, and nearly 9 in 10 were somewhat or very satisfied

WisDOT Wisconsin Survey (May 2004):

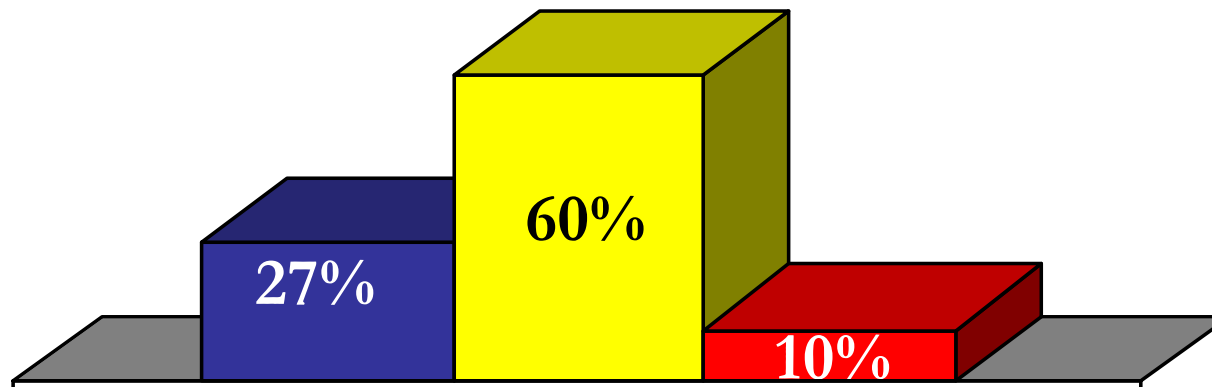
Wisconsin's transportation system is made up of many different elements, which not only includes state and interstate highways, but also airports, waterways, local roads, railroads, and transit systems. Overall, how satisfied are you with the state transportation system today? Would you say very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?



## Almost 9 in 10 Wisconsinites think road conditions have stayed the same or gotten better in the last five years

Capitol Opinion Wisconsin Survey (March 2006):

Compared to five years ago. Do you think Wisconsin roads are in better shape, worse shape or about the same?



■ Much better/Somewhat better   ■ About the same  
■ Somewhat worse/Much Worse

## WisDOT viewed as effective

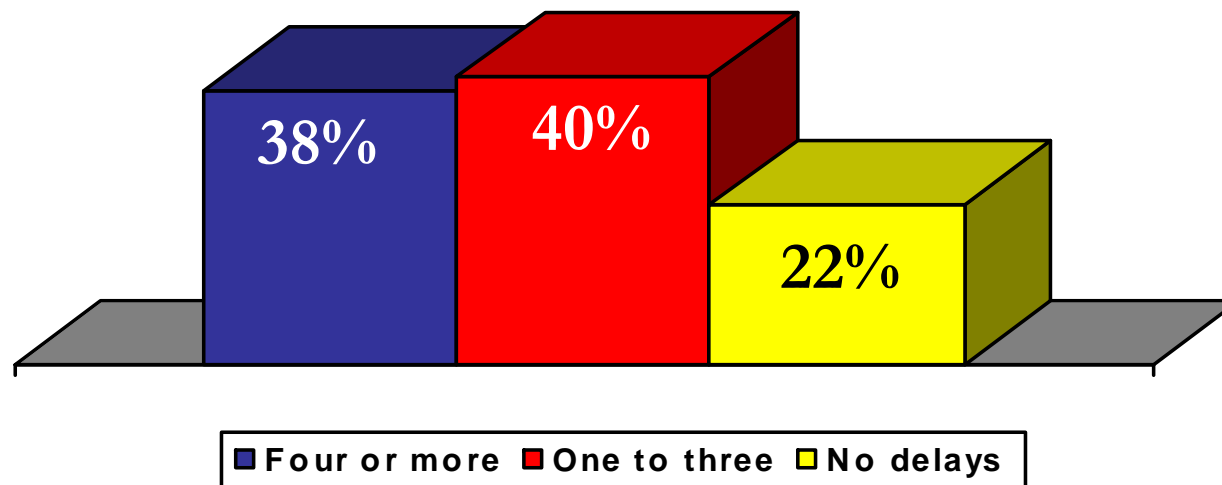
WisDOT Wisconsin Survey (May 2004):

To what degree to you agree with the following statements about WisDOT?



## Three in four Americans experience delays from congestion at least once a week if not more

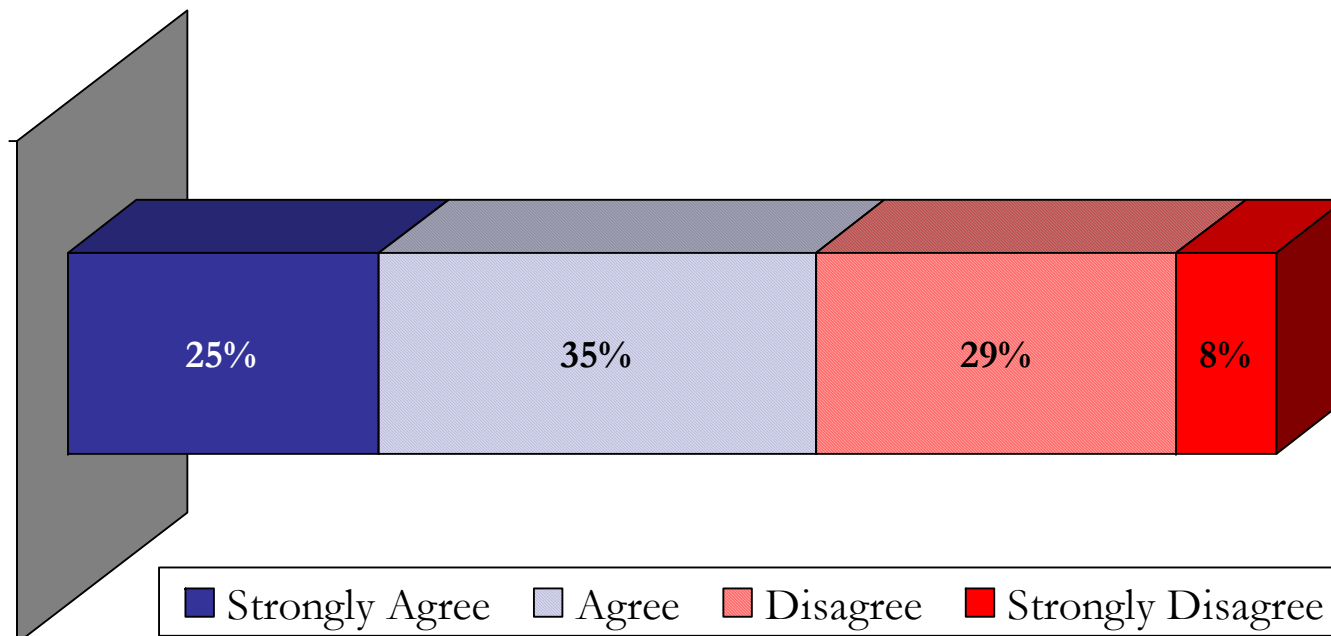
Federal Highway Administration: 2005 Traveler Opinion and Perceptions Survey (TOP)  
How many days a week do you experience delays due to congestion?



## Majority of Wisconsinites recognize the problem of congestion on WI's most important roads

Capitol Opinion Wisconsin Survey (March 2006):

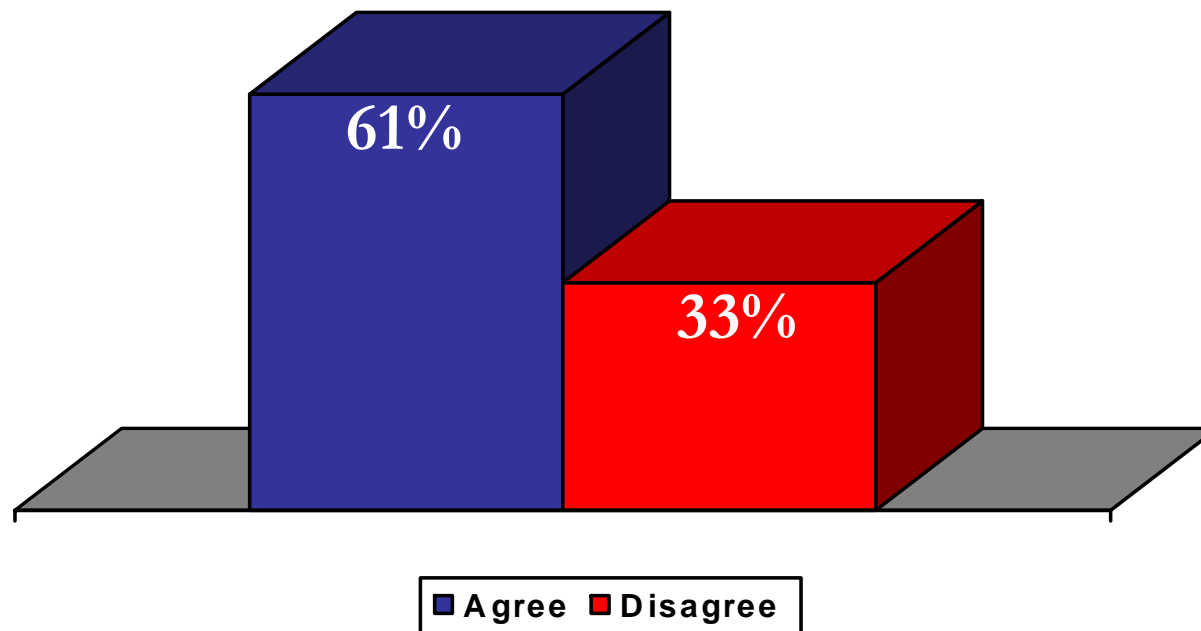
Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement... Traffic and overcrowding is a problem on Wisconsin's most important roads



## In 2003, a vast majority of voters agreed that the nation was facing a transportation crisis

Tarrance Group/Lake, Perry & Snell: Transportation Survey (September 2003)

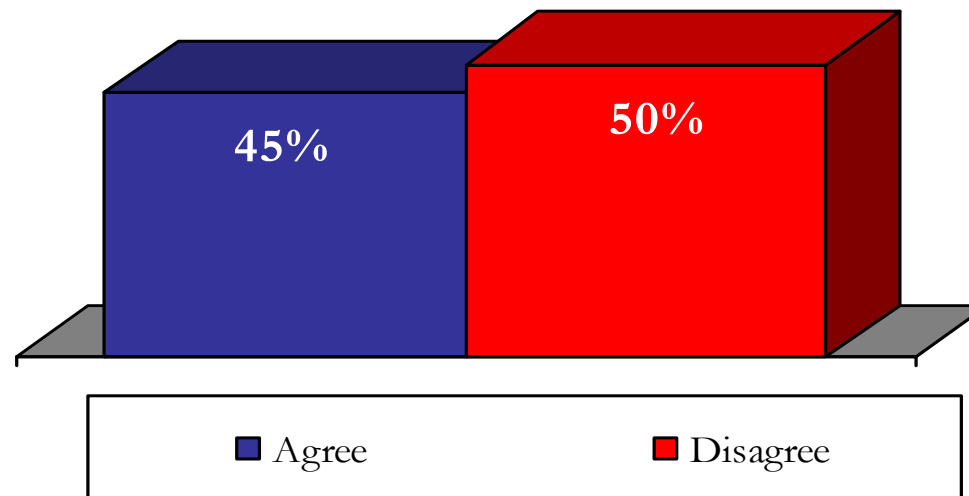
Do you agree or disagree with the statement that America is facing a transportation capacity crisis, meaning that our roads, airports, and public transit systems are overcrowded and struggling to handle the demands of our growing population and economy?



## However today, at least in Wisconsin, most voters do not think there is a capacity crisis

Capitol Opinion Wisconsin Survey (November 2005):

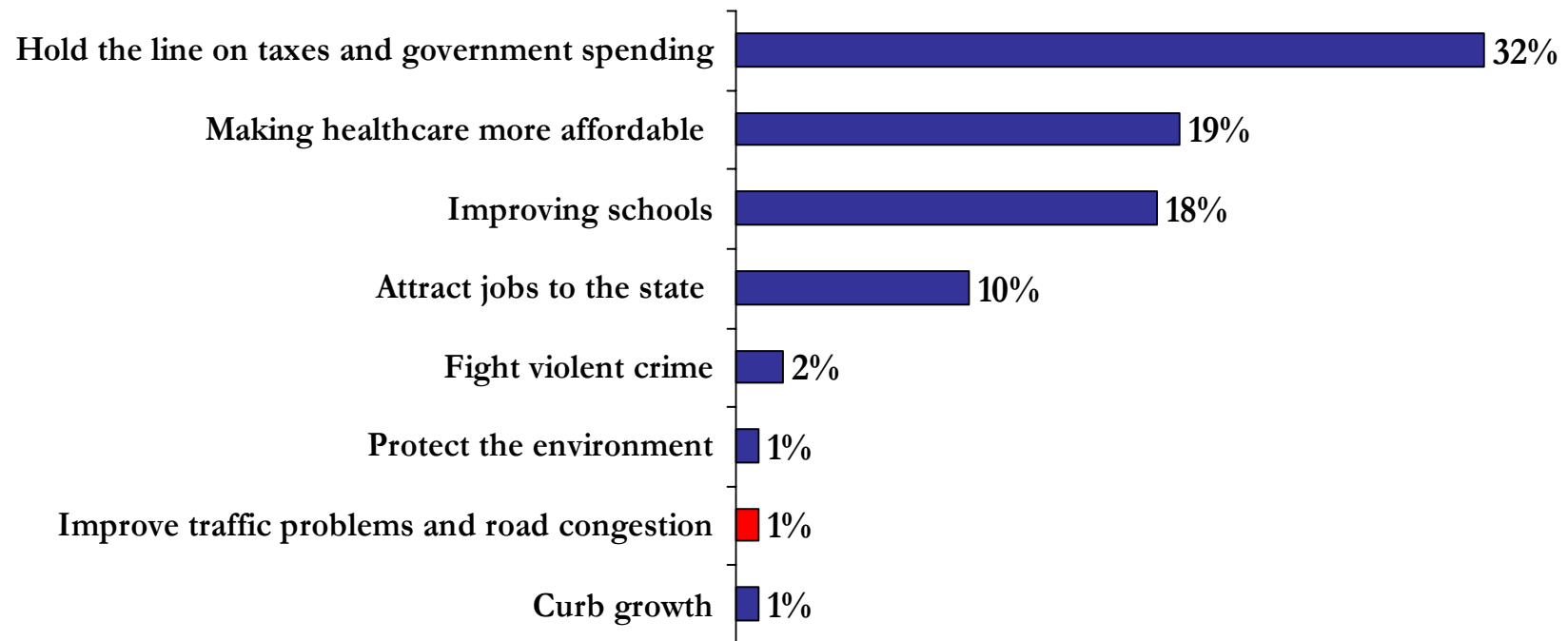
Wisconsin is facing a transportation capacity crisis, meaning that our roads and airports are overcrowded, and travel is more difficult. PROMPT IF NECESSARY: Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree?



## Moreover, transportation is nowhere near the top of voter's priority list for the WI governor and state legislature

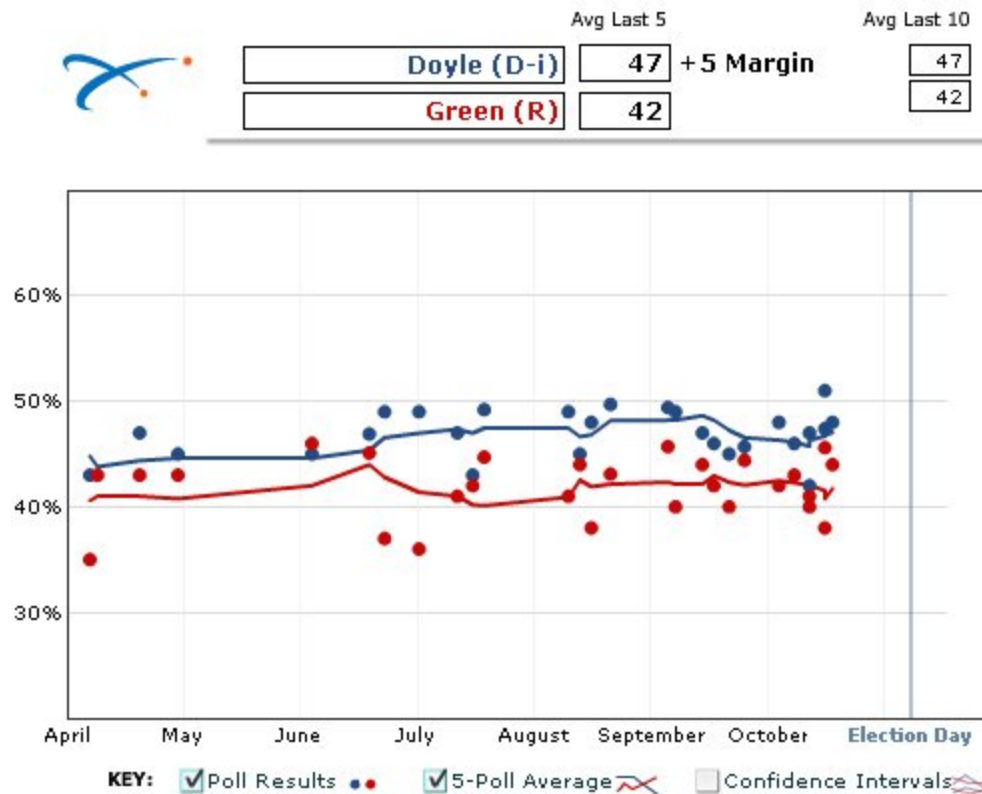
Capitol Opinion Wisconsin Survey (March 2006):

What do you think should be top priority of the Governor and the State Legislature?



## Nor is it likely to play a factor in the gubernatorial race

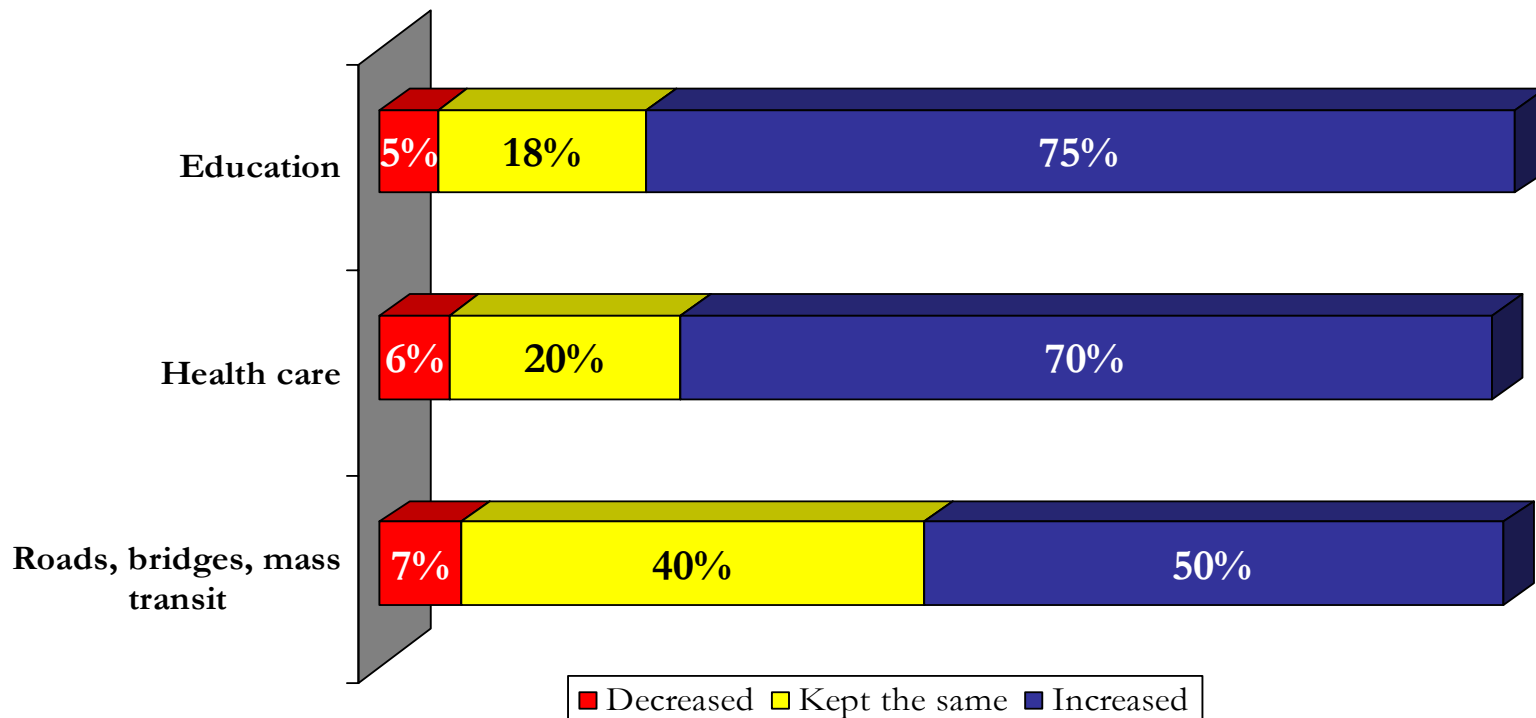
Wispolitics.com/Wood Communication survey (Oct 2006): Most important issues in gov race are: health care/insurance (36 percent), taxes (32 percent), schools (20 percent), jobs (18 percent), ethics and campaign reform (13 percent), stem cell research (13 percent)



Source: www.pollster.com

## Nationally, voters favor increasing education and health care spending over roads, bridges and mass transit

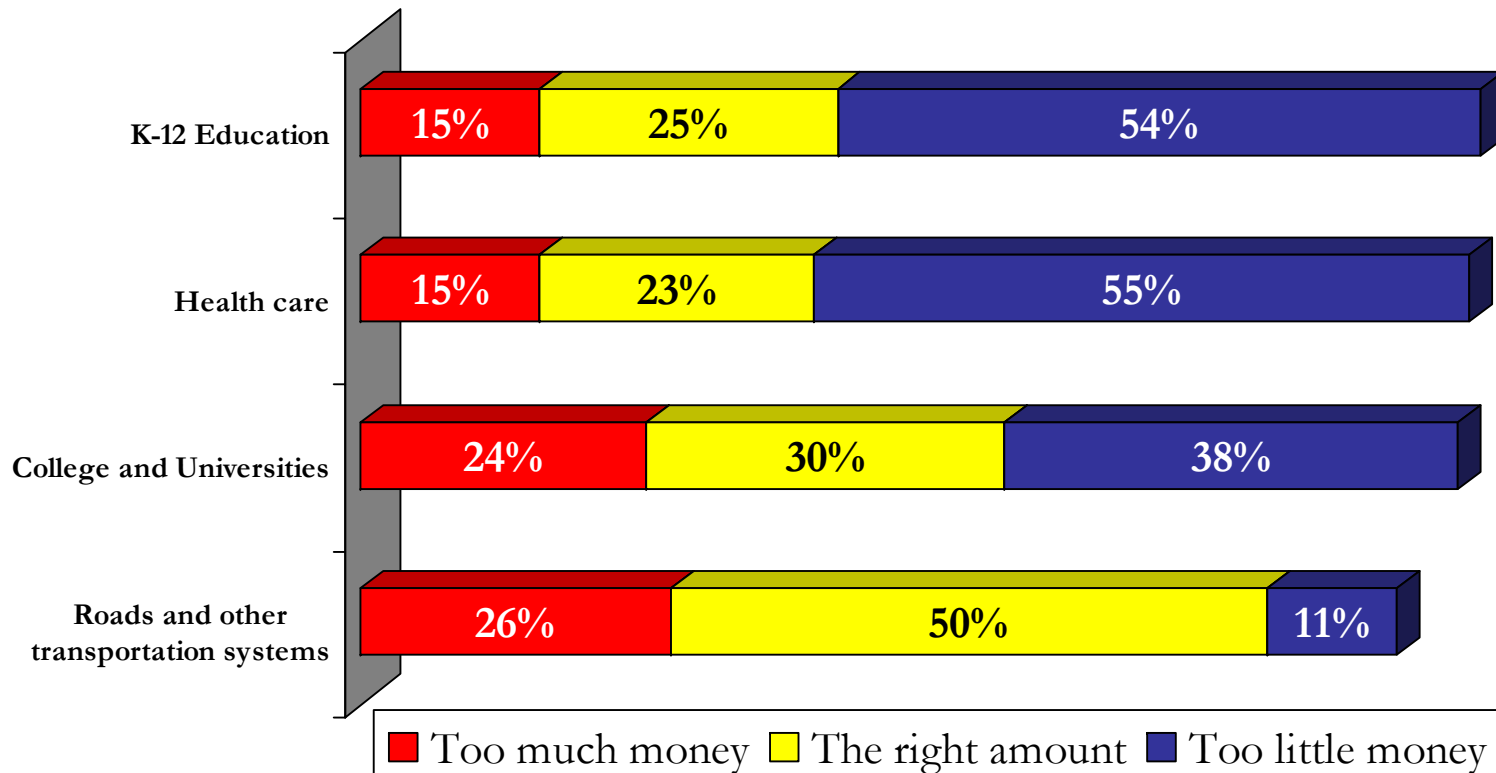
Princeton Survey Research Associates, National Center for State Courts survey (March 2006)  
Now I'm going to read you some different areas where your state spends tax dollars. As I read each one, tell me if you would like to see the State spending in this area increased, decreased, or kept about the same...



## Wisconsinites think we spend the right amount on transportation; only one in ten think we spend too little

Point of view on State of Wisconsin budget;

Now I am going to read you a number of items in the State of WI budget. For each one please tell me whether you think the state pays too much, too little, or the right amount of money...



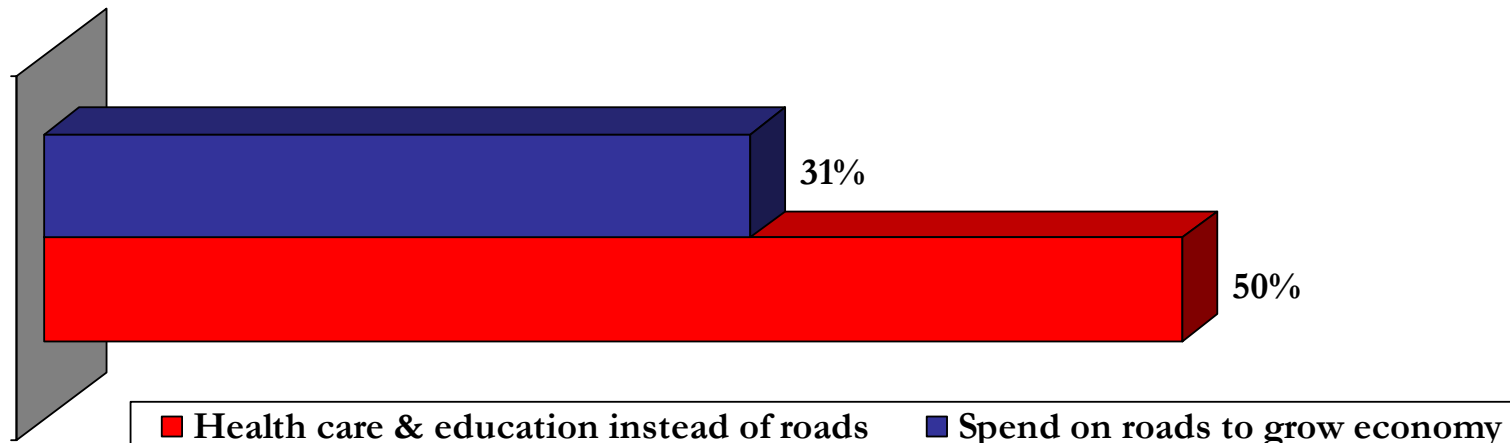
## Wisconsinites favor spending on health care and education over roads and transportation

Capitol Opinion Wisconsin Survey (March 2006):

**Some people say/Other people say that:** Some people say many of our roads are underutilized and we should be spending money on health care and education instead of new roads

**Other people say/Some people say that:** Other people say not investing in the transportation infrastructure is short-sighted, and we need to spend money on roads to continue to grow our economy.

Which viewpoint comes closest to your own?

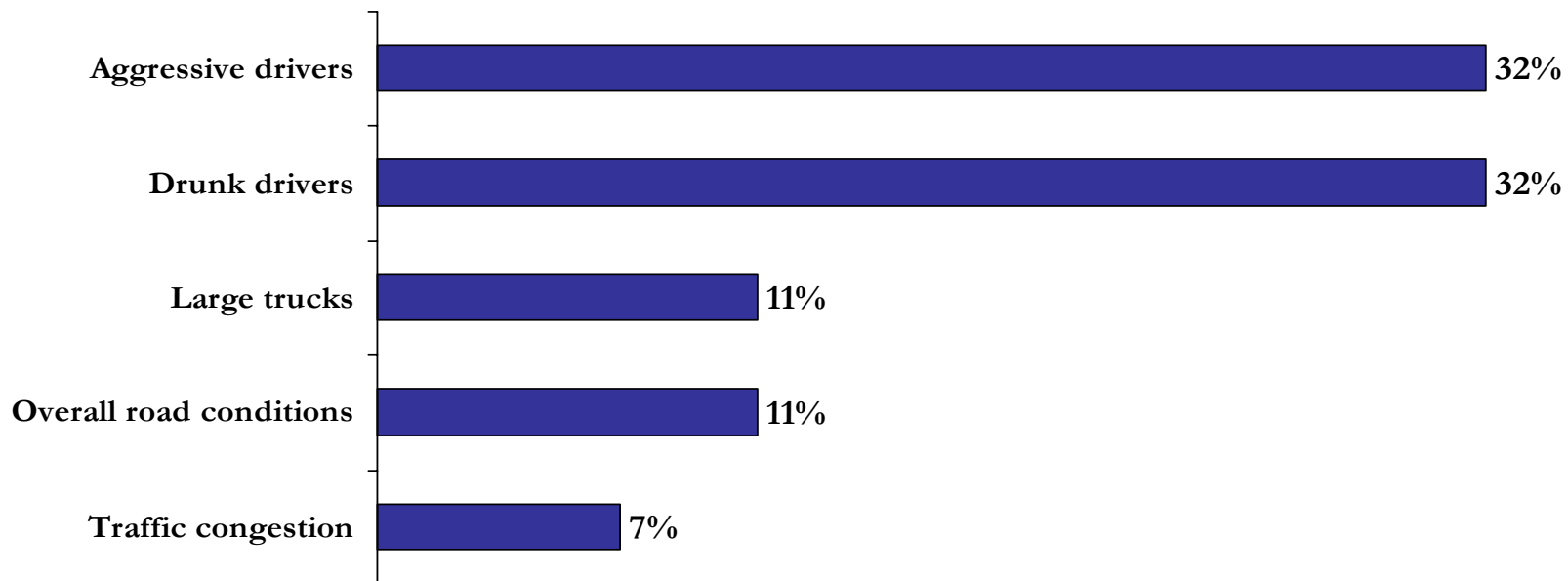


## Safety on roads is a priority, but drivers (not road conditions or congestion) are viewed as the biggest source of danger (both nationally and in WI)

ABC News/Time/Washington Post National Survey (January 2005)

Which of the following do you think most endangers your own safety on the roads?

[See WisDOT Wisconsin Survey (2004) for Wisconsin numbers]



...but communities have dangerous roads/intersections that can be used as an example.  
(Capitol Opinion March/April 2006 Wisconsin Survey & Focus Groups)

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## Environment is a concern, which in part feeds support for public transportation

Federal Highway Administration, Traveler Opinion and Perceptions survey (2005) – On of a scale of one to five (five being the most satisfied), voters rate their satisfaction with efforts to **minimize impact** of transportation system on the environment at a 3.65.

American Public Transportation Association survey (Feb 2004) – Four in five agree that **increased public investment in public transportation** would strengthen the economy, create jobs, reduce traffic congestion, air pollution, and save energy.

Harris Interactive national survey (Feb 2006) – Three to one favor **freight railroads** taking on increased share of freight transportation over trucks

Associated Press/IPSOS national survey (June 2004) – Voters favor **expanding public transportation** over building more roads and highways (51 to 46 percent)

WisDOT Wisconsin survey (May 2004) – Majority support building an expanded **passenger rail** system (63 percent)

## Recommendations:

1. Recognize that in trade-off between health care and education, transportation loses handily.
2. Emphasize
  - a. decreasing congestion and improving safety
  - b. economic benefits and good paying jobs
  - c. *maintaining and improving* existing roads, NOT new ones
3. Capitalize on favorability of industry image and the importance of the service you provide.