



## Office Hours at the Capitol - October 31, 2019 Contact Information and Key Takeaways

### Election administration and voting behavior



#### **Barry Burden**

Professor, Dept. of Political Science  
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**Areas of expertise:** Effects of election laws on voter participation and the activities of political parties and candidates, voter registration, measuring public opinion and political surveys, gender differences in attitudes about politics, voter participation and turnout, voting technology, and best practices in state and local election administration.

**Short bio:** Professor Burden is a national expert on election law and election administration in the U.S. He founded the Elections Research Center at UW-Madison in 2015 and has studied the effects of election reforms, ballot access rules for minor parties, factors affecting voter turnout, the gender gap, and the performance of state election systems. He has provided expert witness testimony in district court cases across the country and provided testimony and reports to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration and Wisconsin Government Accountability Board.

#### **Barry Burden's top takeaways for legislators based on his research**

- ★ To ensure election security, every vote cast must produce a paper ballot record for later review. The two main voting technologies in use – touchscreen voting machines and optically scanned paper ballots – are equally accurate in counting the vote. Where counting errors do appear in Wisconsin, they are mainly due to inconsistent counting by poll workers of minor party and independent candidates on the ballot and write-in votes for other candidates.
- ★ Offering election day voter registration increases the security of the voter registration system and raises voter turnout, especially for voters who have moved recently. Preliminary evidence from other states indicates that automatic voter registration might result in cost savings, reduced burdens on election workers, and higher voter turnout.
- ★ The best existing approach for drawing congressional and state legislative district lines is to delegate the authority to a nonpartisan state agency. This approach is the least expensive, least litigious, and least biased in favor of one political party. Bipartisan citizen commissions such as those used in Arizona and California are also better than state legislatures at reducing costs, lawsuits, and partisan bias.
- ★ The election system has yet to fully serve voters with disabilities or other health concerns. These individuals participate at lower rates than other people even after accounting for factors such as age and education. Accessible technologies required by the Help America Vote Act have not been fully utilized to assist voters with disabilities at the polls. The availability of absentee mail ballots and other accommodations have also not fully enfranchised individuals with limited mobility.



## Prevention of child maltreatment and Child Protective Services (CPS)



### **Kristen (Kristi) Shook Slack**

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**Areas of expertise:** Child maltreatment prevention, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Child Protective Services (CPS), Community Response program and Project GAIN, kinship care, subsidized guardianship, welfare and child welfare systems, poverty policy, program evaluation, and the interaction of different social services and their effects on families.

**Short bio:** Professor Slack conducts research in Wisconsin and nationally on the role of poverty and economic hardship in child maltreatment (i.e., abuse and neglect). With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, she is conducting a study on the effect of economic supports for families in preventing child maltreatment. She also looks at strategies to improve the identification of risks and protective factors related to child neglect. Professor Slack is a long-time consultant to the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board and conducts work on behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. She currently is evaluating the Community Response program and Project GAIN, two Wisconsin-based maltreatment interventions.

### ***Kristen Slack's top takeaways for legislators based on her research***

- ★ Child maltreatment (i.e., abuse and neglect) encompasses half of the 10 original Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and can undermine healthy development and life outcomes.
- ★ Most child maltreatment prevention programs are designed to influence aspects of parenting and parents' functioning known to be associated with abuse or neglect. Poverty also is associated with child maltreatment; recent research has begun to show that providing economic supports to families at risk leads to reductions in child maltreatment.
- ★ Effective targeting of prevention efforts requires an ability to identify and engage populations known to have a high risk for child protective services (CPS) involvement. One critically overlooked population is families reported to CPS but deflected (the case is closed) at the hotline or investigation stage. These families have high rates of re-reports to CPS, yet across the country, little to nothing is done to engage such families in prevention services.
- ★ Wisconsin is the birthplace of an innovative program called Community Response, which engages families deflected from CPS in voluntary, community-based prevention services. Participation rates in these programs around the state are strong. One version of the program (Milwaukee-based Project GAIN) provides economic supports to families and has shown reductions in CPS involvement, particularly for families with the lowest incomes.
- ★ The economic safety net is an integral component of a comprehensive infrastructure for preventing child maltreatment, and this infrastructure should extend prevention services to families deflected from CPS. Combined, these changes have the potential to make a meaningful reduction in child maltreatment.



## Tobacco Dependence, Smoking Cessation, and Electronic Cigarettes



### **Megan Piper**

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**Areas of expertise:** Electronic cigarettes, smoking cessation and implementation of smoking cessation programs, cardiovascular effects of smoking, and tobacco dependence and addiction.

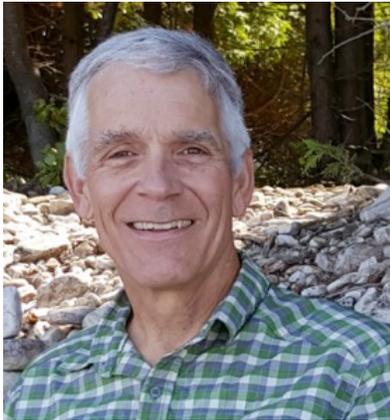
**Short bio:** Professor Piper's research focuses on understanding and treating tobacco dependence, including through electronic cigarette use and nicotine replacement therapies. In 2019, she received the UW Faculty Excellence in Research Award. In 2014, she received the Russell-Jarvik Young Investigator Award from the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco. She has co-written more than 110 peer-reviewed articles and 4 book chapters on smoking dependency and treatment. She serves as an Associate Editor for the Nicotine and Tobacco Research journal.

### **Megan Piper's top takeaways for legislators based on her research**

- ★ Smoking traditional combustible cigarettes is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States and costs approximately \$300 billion each year in health care expenses and lost wages. Smoking kills almost 8,000 Wisconsinites every year, or 19 a day.
- ★ There are evidence-based treatments that can double or triple a smoker's chances of being able to quit smoking for good. These include medications like nicotine replacement (e.g., nicotine patch, gum, mini-lozenge) and supportive counseling to help people develop skills to cope with cravings and other withdrawal symptoms. The Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line (800-QUIT-NOW) provides this kind of evidence-based counseling and 2 weeks of free nicotine replacement medication to all Wisconsinites.
- ★ Electronic cigarettes (like JUUL) have significantly increased in popularity in recent years. While electronic cigarettes may be considered less harmful than traditional combustible cigarettes, research suggests that they are not harmless. Research from England and New Zealand suggests that electronic cigarettes can help adults quit smoking when used like a nicotine replacement product; however, the quit rates have been low. Those who quit smoking tended to continue vaping, whereas those who used medications were more likely to quit nicotine all together.
- ★ The biggest public health threat from electronic cigarettes is the rapid uptake by youth (more than 1 in 4 high school seniors report vaping in the last month). The concerns are that youth vaping leads to addiction, interfering with adolescent brain development and making youth more susceptible to using combustible cigarettes. There is some research to support these concerns.



## Water Quality and Quantity



### Ken Bradbury

Director, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey  
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**Areas of Expertise:** Groundwater movement and contaminant migration, high-cap wells, frac sand mining, karst, presence and transport of viruses in groundwater, water issues on the central sands, mining issues, wellhead protection, and effects of unsewered subdivisions on groundwater.

**Short bio:** Professor Bradbury became the Director of the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and Wisconsin's State Geologist in 2015. His research in Wisconsin has contributed to important insights into groundwater flow through fractured rocks, the transport of viruses in groundwater, and wellhead protection. Over the past 30 years, he has become a leader in communicating technical information for water policy and management decisions. Nationally, he has served on or chaired several National Academies committees, most recently on a project to determine the priority groundwater needs of the U.S. for the next 25 years. Bradbury was awarded the Research Award from the Wisconsin Water Association and has presented short courses on groundwater issues both domestically and abroad, including for UNESCO and as a Fulbright Senior Specialist.

### **Ken Bradbury's top takeaways for legislators based on his research**

- ★ Groundwater conditions in Wisconsin are closely related to variations in local geology. For example, irrigation wells in central Wisconsin draw water from a shallow sandy aquifer, whereas in Madison we use water from wells tapping deep sandstone formations. In eastern and southwestern Wisconsin, groundwater moves through fractured limestone with karst features. Each geologic setting has unique characteristics controlling groundwater quantity and quality.
- ★ Based on two recent sampling events, local private wells in southwestern Wisconsin produce groundwater that often fails to meet drinking water standards. In a random sample of 840 wells, 27% (April 2019) and 42% (November 2018) had evidence of contamination from either nitrate or coliform bacteria. Potential contamination sources include private onsite septic systems, manure lagoons, fertilizer application, and field application of cattle and swine manure.
- ★ Groundwater in areas of karst and fractured rock (e.g., eastern and southwestern Wisconsin) and areas with shallow sandy formations (e.g., the central sands region) are particularly susceptible to contamination from surface sources. Conversely, areas where fine-grained materials (e.g., southeastern Wisconsin) such as clay occur at the surface are less susceptible.
- ★ Groundwater and surface water are well-connected throughout most of the state; thus, groundwater and surface water should be considered and managed as a single resource.

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