

A Leap of Faith?

Scott Liddicoat

Am I taking a leap of faith? Judge for yourself.

I’m writing this one month in advance as if it’ll happen as described. But nothing would make me happier than to have to *eat every last word*.

Thirty years off schedule

A familiar adage in athletics is that “the true test of a champion is the ability to repeat.” If that’s true, we may think of our federal politicians as grandmasters.

You’ll remember starting October 1st of last year, we suffered through the longest full government shutdown in US history. The budget process for 2027 won’t be completed on time this year either. That’s right, the politicians are due to repeat again. But not for the first or second time. Nor even the third or fourth. But for the 29th consecutive year! This year will be thirty straight years of falling short of the rules they’ve set for themselves and failed to complete the federal budget on time. That’s *elite* grandmaster performance!

At this time, here’s how oddsmakers see it:

October 1st Government	Full budget process completed on time	Government shutdown	Continuing resolution (CR) ex- tends government funding at current levels to December
Odds:	Much less than 1% (Some say less than 0%)	15%	85%

But why?

Why so little chance of the full budget process being completed by October first? The House of Representatives has passed only three of the required 12 budget appropriation bills. The Senate has yet to pass any and won’t return to work until September 14th. Then remember last year and the 28 years before that.

And why will we get a peaceful continuing resolution for 2027 after a contentious government shutdown in 2026? House and Senate leaders have already advanced short-term CR proposals to extend funding into December. They’ve disregarded their constitutionally mandated job for the last eleven months. So, they’ve naturally decided the pragmatic thing to do is to set aside their responsibilities even longer—until after the midterm elections.

I get it. So should you. ***We the People*** will never have a clue how much deficit spending will be required to cover 2027 outlays before Congress gets a long head start spending the money.

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That's exactly why...

...the BCTA contacted its congressional delegation at the beginning of the year. We asked them to sponsor three forceful legislative changes incentivizing them to complete the federal budget, and complete it on time. Their responses are found in the table that follows. How would you grade them? Maybe you'll see in their replies why I didn't think writing definitively on this topic a month early was much of **A Leap of Faith**.

Scott

	Brown County Taxpayers Association recommended legislative provisions:		
	1. During a shutdown, Congress and their staff are not paid; pay and benefits are not recovered.	2. During a shutdown, tax collections don't have to be sent to the IRS, resuming after it's over.	3. During a continuing resolution, Congress and staff are not paid; backpay and benefits are restored when a budget is completed.
Rep. Tony Weid	Replied to say he cosponsored the No Budget No Pay Act, applying to lawmakers, but not staff. Representatives would not receive pay during a shutdown. Missed pay is not recovered. This bill has been introduced in the House, but has moved no further.	Disregarded this provision in reply to our contact.	Disregarded this provision in reply to our contact.
Sen. Tammy Baldwin	Staffer informed us she voted for the Kennedy Resolution (passed 99-0), applying to Senators, but not staff. Senators would not receive pay during a shutdown. Missed pay is held and later recovered. The resolution takes effect after the November mid-term elections.	Disregarded this provision in reply to our contact.	Disregarded this provision in reply to our contact.
Sen. Ron Johnson	Did not reply to repeated contacts. Voted for Kennedy Resolution (passed 99-0).	Did not reply to repeated contacts.	Did not reply to repeated contacts.

Monthly Meetings @ The Depot

Monthly meetings are held at **The Depot**, corner of **Dousman and Donald Driver Way, Green Bay**. The location has no stairs or steps, convenient parking, and a room to better accommodate speakers and conversation. There will be selections from which to choose lunch - each one will be priced at **\$15 (includes tax and tip)**. Lunch is at 12:00 noon with monthly speakers presenting.

SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members Welcome

www.BCTaxpayers.com

The Brown County Taxpayers Association is a local group working to bring information and awareness to issues that affect tax policy or impose regulatory burdens.

June Meeting Notes

Visitors/candidates were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves. Nic Cravillion, District Director for State Senator Andre Jacque, and candidate for State Senate District 1 introduced himself and shared details about his background and campaign.

Today's speaker was District 1 State Senator Andre Jacque. With the recent state legislative district boundary changes, Senator Jacque no longer lives in District 1 so is unable to run for re-election. He spoke about the many potential changes in representation across the state and changes in legislative leadership in both parties that may come about after the fall elections. He then engaged the members who presented questions across the spectrum of solar farms, energy subsidies, Data Center siting, and the recently passed sports betting bill. As he leaves office, he will still be involved in WI politics but is unsure what that will look like at this time. Our members thanked Senator Jacque for his many years of service to the citizens of his district.

Business items: President Heidel reminded members to submit any opinion articles for the Tax Times to Tom Sladek or Rod Goldhahn for review with the Executive Committee. The next Executive Committee meeting will immediately follow this meeting to consider a response challenging the legality of the mobile sports betting bill just passed by the WI legislature. President Heidel noted VP Liddicoat will, in the next Tax Times, be summarizing the responses received from our federal representatives concerning our request to them to support withholding legislative pay during shutdowns. A visitor to our meeting expressed concern about the \$4.9M annual, through 2032-33, operational referendum proposed by the West De Pere School District and sought ways to become more involved.

Reports: Director Schwalbach reviewed pending activity at the state level on Governor Evers negotiation with the various tribes on mobile sports better, challenges to legislative redistricting, data center siting, and a suit by the Institute for Reforming Government against the WI DPI for violating the state Open Meetings Law during a private committee conference at a WI Dells water park.

July Meeting Notes

Today's speaker, presenting via Zoom, was Sara R. Shaw, Deputy Research Director, Wisconsin Policy Forum. Ms. Shaw shared the details of the Forum's 16-year study of students, staff and finances of Wisconsin Schools. Since 2010/11 Public School students have decreased 9.2% but private school students have only increased 0.9% due to a declining birth rate since 2007. With the 9.2% decrease in students, there was a 3.2% decrease in schools, but an in-

crease in staff. There are 0.8% more teachers, 4.7% more paraprofessionals (program or teachers' aides), and 15.9% more support staff (principles, district personnel, counselors). This was attributed to a greater number and share of students with disabilities, lagging academics, and declining student mental health and well-being. City districts have lost more students, but they have been able to consolidate schools. Rural districts are also losing students, but it is much more difficult to consolidate due to fewer schools and greater geographic distances. There are compounding cost pressures. Enrollment declines are projected to continue. Salary and benefit costs will rise. State revenue limits for districts have lagged inflation. State aid for additional student needs have not risen alongside increase in costs. Schools have turned to referenda to ask voters for more money. 2024 had the highest number of referenda requests in history at 241 with voters approving a record 169 (70%) of them. There are typically more referenda and higher passage rates in even numbered years when on the ballot with other major elections. 2018 was the peak with a 90% passage rate. In the spring of 2026 only 61% of referenda passed which was the second lowest approval rate in even numbered years since 2010 signaling voters are not as supportive as in the past. The data also shows the gap between the best funded and lowest funded districts is growing, from 25% in 2005 to 38% in 2026. A large portion of that is driven by local referenda. The challenge is finding other ways to serve students without adding staff. Ms. Shaw directed the attendees to access the Forums website for more information and to access their interactive school dashboard.

That website is: wispolicyforum.org/research.

Business items: VP Liddicoat distributed an updated version of the Voters Guide we shared last year which will be distributed across multiple locations, informing voters of the various ways to cast their ballots. He will also be summarizing the responses from our Legislators on our resolution to withhold legislative pay during periods of government shutdowns for the next Tax Times issue. Additionally, VP Liddicoat shared an article he has authored describing the 1976 defection of Russian fighter pilot Viktor Belenko and his observations of socialism. The group thought the article was very well done and discussed options to distribute the article to all BCTA members.

Director Schwalbach reported that the state, in a bipartisan effort, modified our SNAP program to prevent a \$200M penalty from the federal government. President Heidel decided not to pursue a letter to school districts urging them to tie referenda to student performance.

Notes submitted by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

The TAX TIMES

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Jun Meeting Notes

Jul Meeting Notes

Meeting Location
The Depot, Green Bay

12:00 pm Meeting

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - Sept 17, 2026 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00pm at The Depot, Green Bay
Daniel Kane, Brown County
Emergency Management Director

Thursday - Oct 15, 2026 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00pm at The Depot, Green Bay

Tuesday - Oct 20, 2026 Early Voting Starts

Tuesday - Nov 3rd, 2026 Fall Elections

BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 pm, at , at The Depot, Green Bay.

Meetings are open to the public. BCTA Members, their guests and other interested parties are cordially invited to attend and participate in our open discussions.

COST: \$15.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

Sept - Oct 2026



Early Voting Oct 20th
Election Day Nov 3rd

Noon at The Depot

www.BCTAxpayers.com