



Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance

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NEWS

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July 28, 2016

WISTAX WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Government Research Association awards most distinguished research

MADISON—The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX) has received this year's award for Most Distinguished Research from the Governmental Research Association, a national association of non-profit research organizations that analyze policy at the regional and state level.

The award, given at the group's annual conference in Pittsburgh this month, recognized WISTAX for its groundbreaking 2015 report, "Evaluating Wisconsin's Approach to Determining Prevailing Wages," which examined how Wisconsin calculated prevailing wages used for public sector construction projects.

The report received extensive statewide attention and was highlighted in *The Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes*.

The WISTAX report did not take a position on whether prevailing wage laws should exist. However, it did identify flaws and biases that resulted in major, and often contradictory, variations in the wages paid to workers on projects in different parts of the state.

Overall, the report found that in 2014 alone, state and local governments could have saved between \$200 million and \$300 million if market averages, rather than prevailing wages, were used. Small, low-income communities were most affected by wage disparities, with those in Bayfield, Burnett, Florence, Iron, and Marquette counties bearing the heaviest burdens.

In 2015, a law was enacted repealing the prevailing wage requirement for all local projects and basing all rates for state projects on the federal prevailing wage. The law takes effect Jan. 1, 2017.

Now celebrating its 85th year, the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance is Wisconsin's oldest statewide private, non-partisan organization dedicated to government research. For more information, please visit the WISTAX website at www.wistax.org. □