

The Madison Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is deeply grieved about Gov Walker's budget proposals, the manner in which they were proposed, the process by which some were approved, and the growing divisiveness among Wisconsin legislators and citizens that has accompanied them. Friends traditionally value responsible stewardship of financial resources. We do not, however, support the proposed solutions to our budget problems, because we believe that the proposed short-term savings will lead to unacceptable long-term costs. We believe that public education, worker's rights, care of the earth, accessible health care, and services and supports for the most vulnerable are important functions of the government. The experience of our Meeting is that not only the people we personally know and love, but all citizens of Wisconsin, will be hurt by this budget.

Wisconsin is rich in resources, including the creativity of our people. We believe that through respectful dialogue and honest negotiation Wisconsin can rebuild a thriving economy. In order to prevent an even greater concentration of power, that process of dialogue and negotiation needs to be increasingly democratic, participatory, open and transparent. There is a particular need to include voices not traditionally heard in debates at the Capitol. More creative and equitable ways can be found, including increasing revenue sources, to address our state's economic problem. We call on legislators and citizens alike to reach out to one another and to listen deeply to each other's concerns.