

Wisconsin Budget Values & Priorities

During just my lifetime, Wisconsin has lost many members in various sectors of business and industry: automobile factories, paper mills, banks, breweries, tanneries, airlines, outboard motors, entertainment, and many others. Why should it be any different with major league baseball?

Why should we devote taxpayer dollars to subsidize a Milwaukee baseball team simply to delay its moving — again? What is it about the infatuation with sports in our nation anyway?

We have collegiate football coaches, for example, with salaries higher than their institution's president. We fill our stadiums to watch the Lions or Bengals versus the Saints just as the ancient Romans filled their Colosseum to watch the lions or tigers versus the Christians.

Even as greed and corruption played a major role in the downfall of that ancient Roman empire, we see these factors having a major presence in our own society today. How many millions of dollars per year does it take, for example, for our CEOs to buy and display their happiness in comparison with the wages of their employees? How is it that we have many legislators and other elected officials whose major allegiance is to their owner-donors rather than to their voter (and non-voter) constituents?

Overall, what is happening to our values and priorities? Why are we placing sports (along with other escapist and even violent forms of entertainment) ahead of gun safety, education, health care, unemployment compensation, subsidized housing, and more?

To those who argue that these budgetary subsidies are social welfare, why is corporate welfare OK but these others not? (Besides, these others are not welfare anyway; they are part of what any decent civilization provides for its citizens.) Looking at a reversal of syllables in the word "welfare," if our democracy doesn't fare well, then it's farewell.

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