

Advertisement



WISPOLITICS.COM

Partners in Wisconsin's leading statewide public affairs program.

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE



SUBSCRIBER PRODUCTS

- » [Login](#)
- » [Subscriber Products](#)
- » [Logout](#)

SITE RESOURCES

- » [WisPolitics PDA Site](#)
- » [Facebook](#)
- » [Twitter](#)

FEATURES

- » [Election Coverage](#)
- » [Audio Clips](#)
- » [Quorum Call](#)
- » [DC Wrap](#)
- » [Courtwatch Blog](#)
- » [Budget Blog](#)
- » [mkepolitics.com](#)
- » [Ad Watch](#)

SEARCH

- » [Lobbyist Search](#)
- » [State Employee Directory](#)
- » [Find Your Legislator](#)
- » [Money Search](#)
- » [Media Links](#)
- » [State Government: Executive Branch](#)
- » [Voter Information](#)
- » [Blue Book Archives](#)
- » [Wis Court Cases](#)
- » [Public Notices in WI Papers](#)

LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

- » [Legislative Notification Service](#)
- » [State Legislation](#)
- » [U.S. Congress](#)

OTHER SITES

- » [WisOpinion.com](#)
- » [WisBusiness.com](#)
- » [IowaPolitics.com](#)

Submit comments, news tips, press releases and video links to staff@wispolitics.com

Advertisement



WisPolitics: Thousands of conservatives rally on Milwaukee lakefront against too much government
9/20/2009

MILWAUKEE -- Conservative speakers, including GOP gubernatorial candidate Scott Walker (*left*) and Milwaukee Co. Sheriff David Clarke, got cheers from thousands at Veterans Park on the lakefront as they called for limited government, lower taxes and more freedom.

The "tea party" rally was sponsored by the Wisconsin chapter of the conservative Americans for Prosperity group.

The crowd -- mostly middle-aged and white, many wearing red, white and blue clothing --- resembled 4th of July picnickers. Homemade signs abounded: "Born Free but Taxed to Death," "M.I.A. Principles and Values in D.C." and "Today's Democrats are Radical Socialists." Attendees cheered and clapped as speakers talked about patriotism and called for "taking back government."

In a week dominated by a national discussion of whether racism is fueling criticism of President Barack Obama, Clarke drew applause when he told those assembled that he has forgiven America for slavery.

"I think what's important is that the problem of high taxes transcends race, including black middle-class Americans who find their hard-earned money taken away," the elected African-American said afterward. "High taxes also affect the poor."

"I don't see a sea of white. I see a sea of Americans," said Clarke.

Turnout was better than expected, said Mark Block, state director for Americans for Prosperity, adding membership in his group reached 40,000 as of Saturday morning. "I'm ecstatic," he said. "If you'd done this a year ago, you couldn't have filled a phone booth."

The state AFL-CIO called on members late Friday to not let the tea party attendees take over Milwaukee. "What they fail to realize is that corporate greed is not a family value," said an e-mail from the union. "It is critical that labor responds and shows support for workers and families. Come show your support for an economy that works for all and make sure we move our country forward not backwards."

But if dissenters were present, they were largely quiet.

Some of the people interviewed said they didn't belong to Block's group or to any organization.

"I just came here with my mom" said Linda Clerkin of Milwaukee's Bay View neighborhood, who held up a replica of a dirty antique American flag with 13 stars.

"It's made to look as if it's stained with tea," she said. "I'm just a person who's upset with government in general, especially since the big government bailout.

"I'm not here to support Democrats or Republicans. I'm looking for an alternative, and I'd love to see an independent party win the next election," said Clerkin, blaming both the Bush and Obama administrations. "Down with the establishment," she said.

Most attendees appeared to target their frustration against President Barack Obama. "Obama, Osama: Both bombed the American people," one homemade sign said. "Barack, I'm broke," another declared. Many signs protested proposed governmental health care reform as "Obama Care" and bore symbols of skulls and crossbones.

"I'm very upset with the Obama administration," said Lita Pacia of Wauwatosa, who held up a shovel with a sign attached that said, "Here's my shovel, Obama. Where's my shovel-ready job?" on one side, and the phrase, "Grandma, dig your own grave. R.I.P." on the other.

"If my father were alive to see me today, he'd be very proud. He was in a forced labor camp during World War II. My father saw tyranny in full force."

Like many in attendance, Pacia said she was particularly against government-mandated health care. Describing herself as a freelance graphic designer, Pacia said, "I don't have health insurance. I choose not to. I can afford to pay for my own health care."

John Staple, a self-employed truck driver from Sheboygan, said his health insurance is expensive, but that he doesn't

[Scott Walker For Governor](#)

Take Back Wisconsin! Join the Team Today.
www.ScottWalker.org

Ads by Google

Ads by Google

- [Milwaukee Hotel](#)
- [Milwaukee Guide](#)
- [County Milwaukee](#)
- [Milwaukee House](#)
- [Milwaukee Photo](#)

trust the government to take it over. "They should fix Medicare and Medicaid first," he said.

For Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, who announced in April his bid for the governor's office, Saturday's event was a campaign opportunity.

"The pundits see events like this as all about anger," he told the crowd. "I see it as about hope. Economic prosperity for all is based on limited government, lower taxes, and restoration of personal liberties. Some people say more bureaucracy is our answer. We believe that giving people more freedom is the answer to our problems."

When asked afterward if he opposed Wisconsin's BadgerCare health program as part of unwanted bureaucracy, Walker said of the crowd, "I think they're concerned about government-run health care for everyone, whereas BadgerCare is for those with challenges to obtaining health insurance."

Despite the tone of the signs, Walker said: "They're saying we don't agree with his plan, not protesting who's president."

*By Kay Nolan
For WisPolitics.com*



[Printer-friendly version](#)



[Send this article to a friend](#)

[SHARE](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) ...



[f](#) Kay Nolan likes this. Be the first of your friends to like this. · [Admin](#)
Page · **Error** Unlike
You like this.

[WisOpinion.com](#) | [WisBusiness.com](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright ©2010 WisPolitics.com All rights reserved. Website development by [wisnet.com LLC](#)