



Home News Watchdog Opinion Sports Business Food Entertainment Lifestyle Photo/Video Moms Classified Jobs Cars Homes Rentals MJs List

Got a Tip? NewsWatch Weather Blogs Obituaries AP Wires Mobile Contact Us RSS Corrections Traffic Times Gas Prices Tickets Login Subscriber Services

Hot Topics: Mitt Romney's bet | Total lunar eclipse | Hunt sports chat | Dick Bolender

Search bar with search button

TEXT SIZE AA - +

### News and Opinion Blogs

Home » Blogs » News and Opinion Blogs



## The Wisconsin Voter

The Journal Sentinel's Craig Gilbert explores political trends in a purple state.

### State recall movement stands alone in U.S. history

By Craig Gilbert of the Journal Sentinel

Recommend 364 Tweet 48

Share

print e-mail

March 12, 2011 | (295) COMMENTS

#### Photo Gallery



State budget debate: 3/12

#### Video



Tractorcade leads huge protest in Madison

Page 1 of 3

Number of state lawmakers removed from office by recall in all of American history: 13.

Number of state lawmakers currently facing recall campaigns in Wisconsin: 16.

Those figures hint at the oddity and immensity of what's going on in the Badger State. But it's not just their breadth that makes the recall drives in Wisconsin unprecedented in American politics. It's the national dimension they've taken on.

State lawmakers in America have been recalled from office over tax hikes, legislative pay raises, lying, corruption, sexual impropriety and collaborating with the other party. They've been recalled in California, Oregon, Idaho, Michigan and Wisconsin.

But none of those previous campaigns transcended personal, local or state politics. None was viewed by important interests on both sides as a defining battle in a big national struggle. None invited the kind of outside fundraising and advertizing we have begun to see here.

"This is much greater than the politics over the Wisconsin budget," says Dan Smith, a University of Florida political scientist who did his doctoral work at Madison.

"No other recalls -- including the failed ones that have been launched and rejected as unconstitutional by the courts against US Senators and Congressmen-- have ever had the broad national overtones of the proposed Wisconsin one," says Joshua Spivak, a senior fellow at the Hugh Carey Institute for Government Reform in New York, who has written extensively on the history of recalls.

Here's a list of all the state legislators in the U.S. who have ever lost recall elections, based on data gathered from Spivak and numerous other sources and cross-checked with the National Conference of State Legislatures:

2003	Wisconsin	Gary George	Democrat
1996	Wisconsin	George Petak	Republican
1995	California	Doris Allen	Republican
1995	California	Paul Horcher	Republican
1988	Oregon	Pat Olson	Republican
1985	Oregon	Bill Gillis	Republican
1983	Michigan	David Serotkin	Democrat
1983	Michigan	Phil Mastin	Democrat
1971	Idaho	Aden Hyde	Republican
1971	Idaho	Fisher Ellsworth	Republican
1935	Oregon	Harry Merriam	Republican
1914	California	Edwin Grant	Democrat

#### All Politics Blog



Read all budget-related blog posts from March 12.

Go to archive

#### Related Coverage

##### News

Madison: Democratic senators return to Capitol, get boisterous welcome
The Wisconsin Voter: State recall movement stands...

advertisement



#### LATEST THE WISCONSIN VOTER POSTS

- The coming deluge of political advertising in Wisconsin
- With rivals on a roller coaster, Romney is the constant in GOP contest
- Wisconsin, the Midwest and the 2012 electoral map
- A 2012 Wisconsin polling snapshot: tight races, vulnerable big-name pols
- Recalls in Arizona and Michigan cap a 2011 recall spree led by Wisconsin
- Ohio votes Tuesday in the next big showdown over collective bargaining
- How a poor economy could affect the Scott Walker recall fight
- Why Republicans want to use the new legislative maps in 2012 recall fight
- Changing the way the Electoral College works in Wisconsin: a recipe for irrelevance?
- The Walker recall fight: marching off into the political unknown

#### MORE ABOUT THIS BLOG

The Wisconsin Voter is a blog about elections, political trends and public opinion in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest. It is less about politicians than the people who elect them. It's aimed at political junkies and general readers alike. Its subjects include:

- The role this state and region play as electoral battlegrounds.
- Voting patterns and trends at the local, state and regional level.
- What makes voters here different from voters in other places.
- Public opinion and the election climate.

Craig Gilbert is the Journal Sentinel's Washington, D.C. Bureau Chief and national political reporter.

Read more about this blog

#### WISCONSIN TREND TRACKER

Charting how each...

