**Fiscal Facts: Local spring elections featured few choices for Wisconsin voters**

As Wisconsinites exercised their constitutional right to vote April 7, the dearth of competition for local elected offices left many voters with no alternatives in many important races.

While the U.S. presidential primary and Wisconsin Supreme Court campaigns attract the most attention, state voters also saw local races on their spring ballots for seats on county boards and city councils. Yet despite the key role these officials play in overseeing critical services (including those directly related to the COVID-19 response), most races on the April ballot featured only one candidate.

Only about one out of every five board of supervisor races in the state’s 10 most populous counties had more than one contender. While there is more competition in city council races in the state’s 10 most populous cities, nearly half of city council seats up for election were uncontested.

While at first glance the ongoing COVID-19 crisis might seem to overshadow such concerns, it also could be argued that effective leadership at the local level has never been more critical. Indeed, recent days have shown how local leaders make critical decisions such as how to effectively provide emergency medical services, keep transit services running, and whether to close public spaces.

Even in the best of times, city councils and county boards adopt budgets that collectively exceed several billion dollars each year and provide critical services to residents that impact their day-to-day lives and local economies. While choice does not necessarily guarantee better governance, many Wisconsinites unfortunately found their spring ballots contained many questions but only one possible answer.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at wispolicyforum.org.*