



## How Wisconsin has become more Southern



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Although Wisconsin may be far away in distance from the Mason-Dixon line, Wisconsin's overall political culture has become more in alignment with that of Southern states, according to University of Wisconsin political science professor David Canon.

"We are certainly becoming more Southern," Cannon tells Action 2 News.

According to Canon, over the past few years, laws that have been adopted by the Wisconsin legislature are more in sync with Southern states.

"Wisconsin is closer to Alabama and Mississippi than Minnesota and Massachusetts," he said.

Citing right to work laws, gun laws, Act 10, rejecting Medicaid expansion, declining support for public education, less environmental regulation, and changes in campaign finance laws, Cannon says Wisconsin is definitely more Southern in terms of policy.

In Madison, the Walker administration says it's fighting to protect Wisconsin's rights against the federal government's alleged infringement of state's rights. Something that has typically been a more Southern view of a Laissez-faire relationship between the states and federal government.

Wisconsin recently joined 23 other states (<http://wbay.com/2015/11/03/wisconsin-sues-federal-government-to-halt-epa-carbon-rule/>) suing the federal government over the requirement to reduce carbon dioxide emissions at power plants by an average 32 percent before 2030.

Many high-profile pieces of legislation are being signed into law in Wisconsin and are immediately challenged in the courts, according to Anne E. Schwartz, Director of Communications and Public Affairs at the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

On Nov. 11, Gov. Walker signed 49 new laws ([Click here to view the news laws](http://wbay.com/2015/11/11/walker-signs-49-new-laws-today/)). (<http://wbay.com/2015/11/11/walker-signs-49-new-laws-today/>)

In order for Wisconsin to protect state's rights, the state has retained a new Solicitor General.

"The Solicitor General will ensure we [Wisconsin] have strong legal representation when it comes to protecting our state's interests," Schwartz said adding that "The federal government is increasingly encroaching on our state's sovereignty."

On the East Coast, the complete opposite is happening.

Ironically, some of the Mid-Atlantic states with deep Southern roots, such as Virginia — which even served as home for the capitol of the Confederacy — have actually shifted to a more Northern view on public policy matters in some cases.

On the East Coast, "[The cultural Mason-Dixon line is just moving farther and farther south](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/15/AR2011011503988_2.html?sid=ST2011011504186) ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/15/AR2011011503988\\_2.html?sid=ST2011011504186](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/15/AR2011011503988_2.html?sid=ST2011011504186)) as more people from other parts of the country move in," H. Gibbs Knotts, a professor at Western Carolina University told the Washington Post.

Even Southern accents are starting to disappear in Virginia. Russell Potts, a Virginia lawmaker told

the Washington Post.

"I happen to believe that southern Virginia now actually starts down near Richmond. You can't even say that Fredricksburg is Southern," Potts said.

Meanwhile back in Wisconsin, perhaps it's not just politics that have shifted. There are signs of cultural changes too.

A Green Bay attorney, Andy Williams wants to build a gun club in the form of a Southern Style mansion, hoping to draw in crowds from all over the country.

The 45,000 square foot facility would anchor a [37-acre development \(http://wbay.com/2015/11/17/upscale-gun-club-proposed-in-bellevue/\)](http://wbay.com/2015/11/17/upscale-gun-club-proposed-in-bellevue/) in Bellevue with upscale retail stores and single family homes.



(<http://wbay.com/2015/11/17/upscale-gun-club-proposed-in-bellevue/>)

Wisconsin has also seen an increase in top tier Country Music talent (<http://wbay.com/2015/11/04/local-aspiring-singers-working-hard-in-nashville/>) touring the area. From performers at Lambeau Field and the Resch Center to Country Music USA in Oshkosh and Summerfest in Milwaukee, there's certainly no shortage of country music in the state.

"Since the Resch Center opened, and even with Kenny Chesney over at Lambeau Field, we've had incredible success with country music from the day we opened the doors," said Ken Wachter, President of PMI Entertainment.

As for Southern food, the Tennessee based restaurant chain Cracker Barrel has expanded its presence over the past several years in Wisconsin.

Although Wisconsin now has four locations, none are located in Northeastern Wisconsin, yet.

But, the Fox Valley has no shortage of southern style food either. From Granddaddy's and Cat & Jim's Art & Soul in Green Bay to The Cozy Corner in Appleton, catfish and fried okra are served daily.

Regarding climate, at least for this winter, WSI is reporting that the north and the south have flip-flopped. The upper Midwest, including Wisconsin, is expecting warmer than average temperatures and the south predicts much cooler temperatures.



So, what do you think — Has Wisconsin become more Southern?

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