Media Landscape Research

Goal: A thorough understanding of the regional political landscape is a key step for designing any public policy media campaign. We focus on two methods to achieve this: 1) a deep analysis of the **political landscape** (e.g., state demographics), and 2) a statewide **media audit** to assess how the issue is being represented and the key people involved.

Political Landscape

An assessment of the political landscape is key to understanding the location and distribution of major groups of voters, population centers, state news organizations, and media markets. To conduct this analysis, use the layers and filters in the **PurpleState map tool** to assess the main trends in the state.

The **Map Layers** illustrate overall state trends:
1. **Population**: This layer uses census data to show county populations across the state.
2. **Voting History:** This layer provides an overview of general political trends by using county voting results from a recent Governor election.
3. **Income:** This layer uses census data to illustrate average income across counties.
4. **Media Markets:** This layer shows how the state is broken into broadcast television markets, as defined by the Nielsen rating agency. This organization gathers information about how many people in the media market watch particular television shows in order to set the costs of advertising. We use these media markets to assess the relative costs of television, radio, and newspaper advertisements in these regions.
5. **Congressional Districts**: This layer shows how the state is divided into voting districts for its representatives to Congress.

To explore the demographic data from a specific county, click on that county in the map. This window will include additional census demographics like total population, age, race, and political views (which are based on recent polling data). These data can be viewed in percentages or raw numbers.

The **Map Filters** allow our consultants to quickly identify where different demographic groups live in the state. They can be used along with the map layers to look at combinations of demographic categories – such as where the largest groups of wealthy individuals over the age of 65 live.
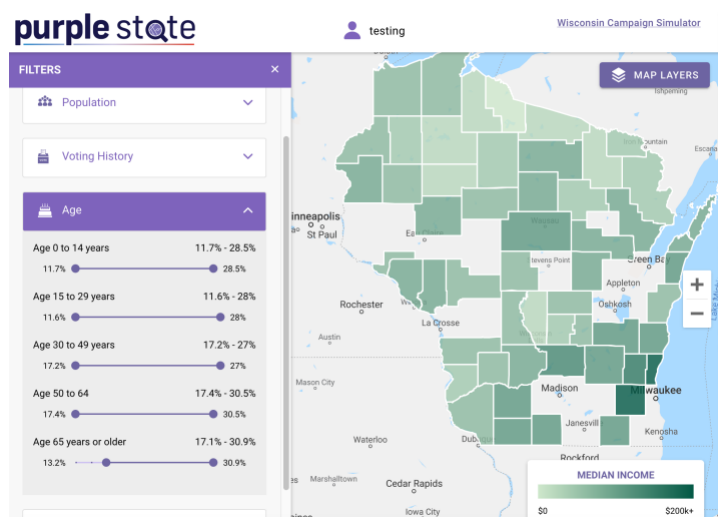
Media Audit

The **media audit** helps to understand how the campaign issue is viewed across different media markets. By conducting a media audit, we aim to:

    1) identify important **stakeholders** on the issue,
    2) assess any **regional differences** in how issue
    is being framed or discussed,
    3) identify **messages** and **themes** that may be used
    in our campaign, and
    4) identify news organizations and other groups that
    may be potential **allies**.

    To begin the **media audit**, turn on the **News** layer.
    Pinned news stories related to the campaign issue
    will appear across the major media markets. Click
    the link to access the news story.
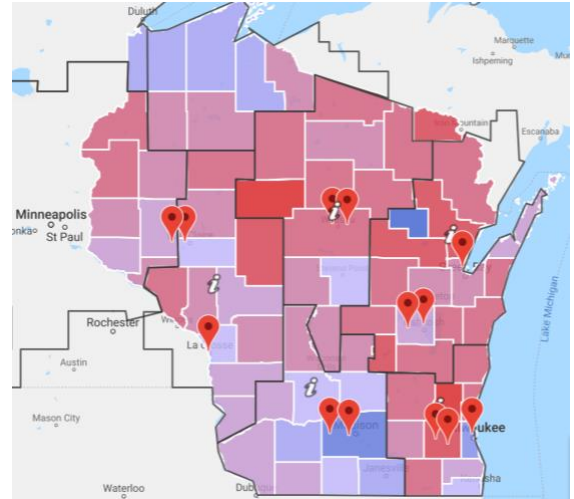
Regional Differences: Use the media sources to identify how the issue is being discussed across the state. Ask yourself: Where are most of the news sources located? How is the issue being defined or framed? What are the key arguments being used for or against the issue? Is a majority view presented or is it hotly contested?

Target Audience: The best media campaigns are relatable and designed to compel a target group to action. Scan news sources for clues about who they're trying to reach. Articles may refer to specific groups by name (e.g., parents, hunters, or conservatives). In other cases, the tone of a particular message might indicate a particular audience.

Strategies and Messages: The news sources in the media audit show how the issue may be viewed in different regions of the state and the groups who are the audience for these news sources. Identify key strategies and messages from these sources that could be used in your campaign. For example, a "Not in my backyard" strategy can be very effective for a part of the state that is highly impacted by an issue.

News Organizations: Which journalists and news organizations are most relevant? Identifying news organizations across media (e.g., print, television, online) is key to reaching target demographics. Identify the major local and regional organizations who may support or oppose your campaign issue. These could include think tanks, special interest groups, and political action committees.