

Schools



Community Engagement

From a social capital perspective





Overview

- WISTAX: research, education and schools
- The topic (‘real dollars’) vs. the talk
- Background ► Several views of engagement
- Some anecdotes from the trenches and . . .
the engagement lessons they teach
- A quick look at social capital
- Developments in the states, incl. Wisconsin
- Research on in-state referenda



Background and anecdotes

- Perspectives from a weird background
- Board experience: Sup't and information
- Citizen observer of school district/loc. gov't
- Observer of Wis. districts and referenda
- Some anecdotes from the trenches and . . .
the engagement lessons they teach
- Conclusion: Tell the truth; earn trust
- Trust is everything (which brings us to social capital)

Crash course in social capital

- Elusive meaning, a ‘good definition’



- trust, societal norms, family/community advantages?

- Better: **“resources embedded in social networks”**

- de Tocqueville (1831): New England town
“The American attaches himself to his little community . . . His cooperation in its affairs ensures his attachment to its interests.”

- L. J. Hanifan (1916) [next slide]

- J. Coleman, Putnam (2000): *Bowling Alone*



Social capital, cont'd

“In the use of the phrase social capital I make no reference to the usual acceptation of the term capital . . . but rather to . . . goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit, the rural community, whose logical center is the school. In community building as in business organization and expansion there must be an accumulation of capital before constructive work can be done.

— L. J. Hanifan (1916) “The Rural School Community Center”



Developments in the states

- Trend: Legal/interest grp./local district pressure
Increased state funding/equity & power shift

- CA: Prop. 13, later funding shift via prop.

The good & bad: “It appears that the increased equity the California system has achieved has created more Chevrolets than Cadillacs among the state’s schools.” (Picus, 1991)

- Ditto: WA, HI [In Hawaii . . .]

“The centralized allocation of funds has not provided a stable source of funding and, in fact, has over time resulted in a severe decline in the ratio of funds for public education to the total state appropriations. (Thompson, 1992)



Which brings us to Wisconsin (familiar?)

- 1980s: Strikes, state regulation of employm't
- Late 80s: School tax accelerates, anxiety
- 93-94: Two-thirds funding: +\$1 billion in aid
- Trade-off: Revenue limits and QEO
- Results: OK, while enrollment grew; but QEO crowds out of instruct'n/sal's \$ for benefits
- . . . and state inability to fund, then budget crises, followed by aid slowdown, then cuts; rev. caps tightened, then cut, now frozen

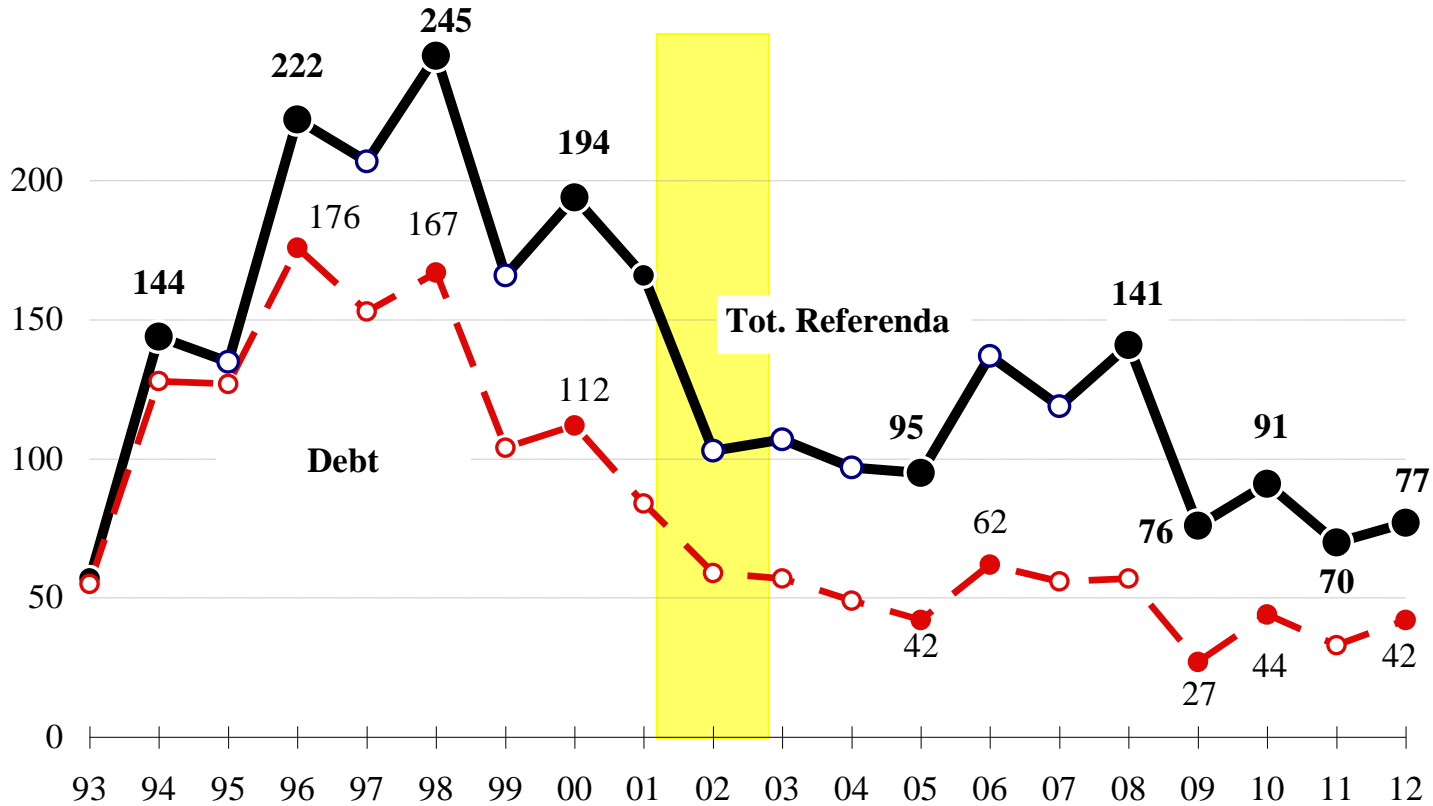
Here we are: The referendum age.....

- Era 1: 2/3rds and bond ref.! (\$300m > \$1.3b)
- Enrollment declines begin, intensify
- Aid growth decelerates; retrenchment begins
- Aids cut, revenue cap tighten, cut . . .
- Era 2: Emergence of nonrecurring referenda

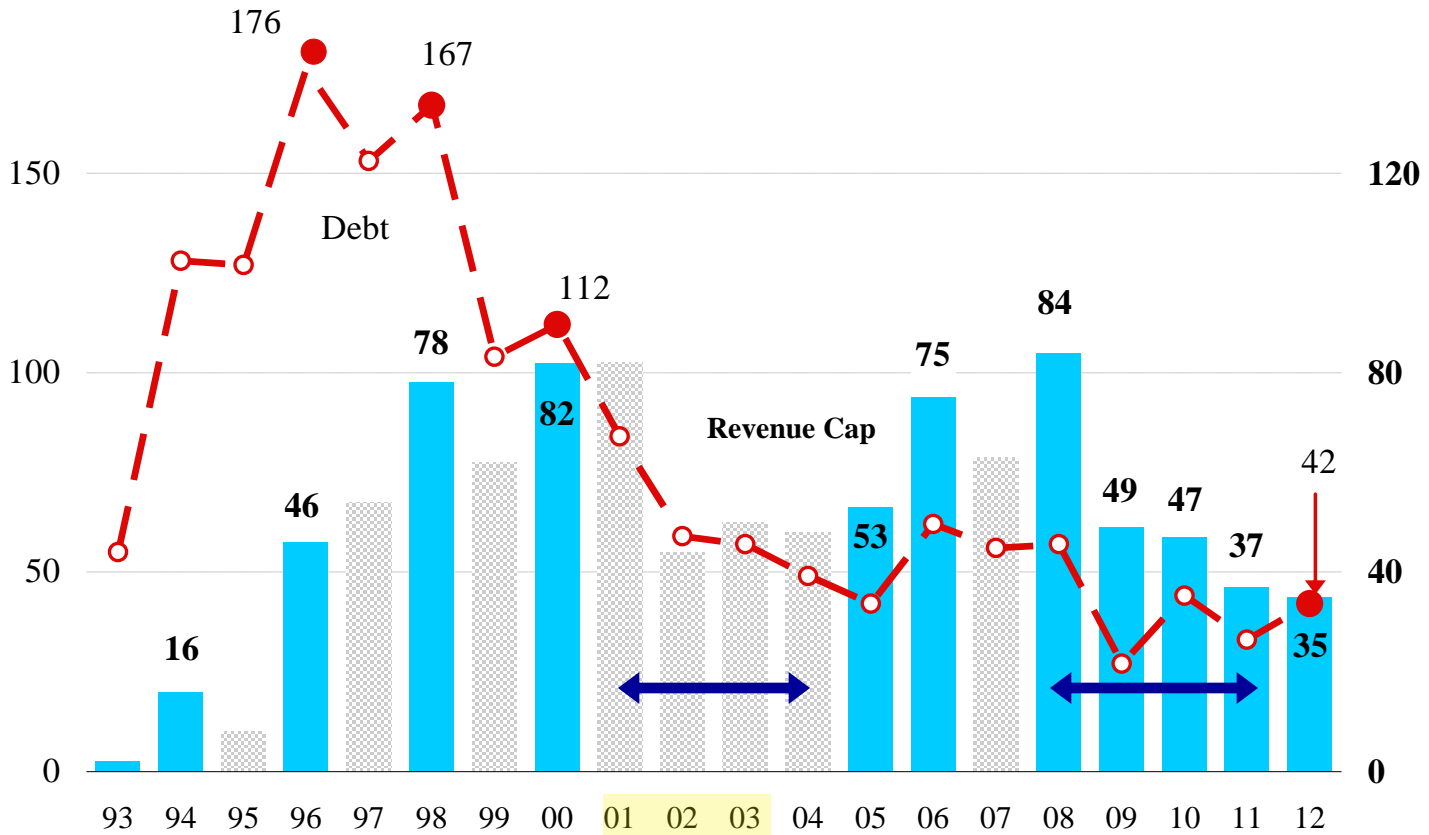
“Oh, now I get why he was telling stories
and talking about social capital.”



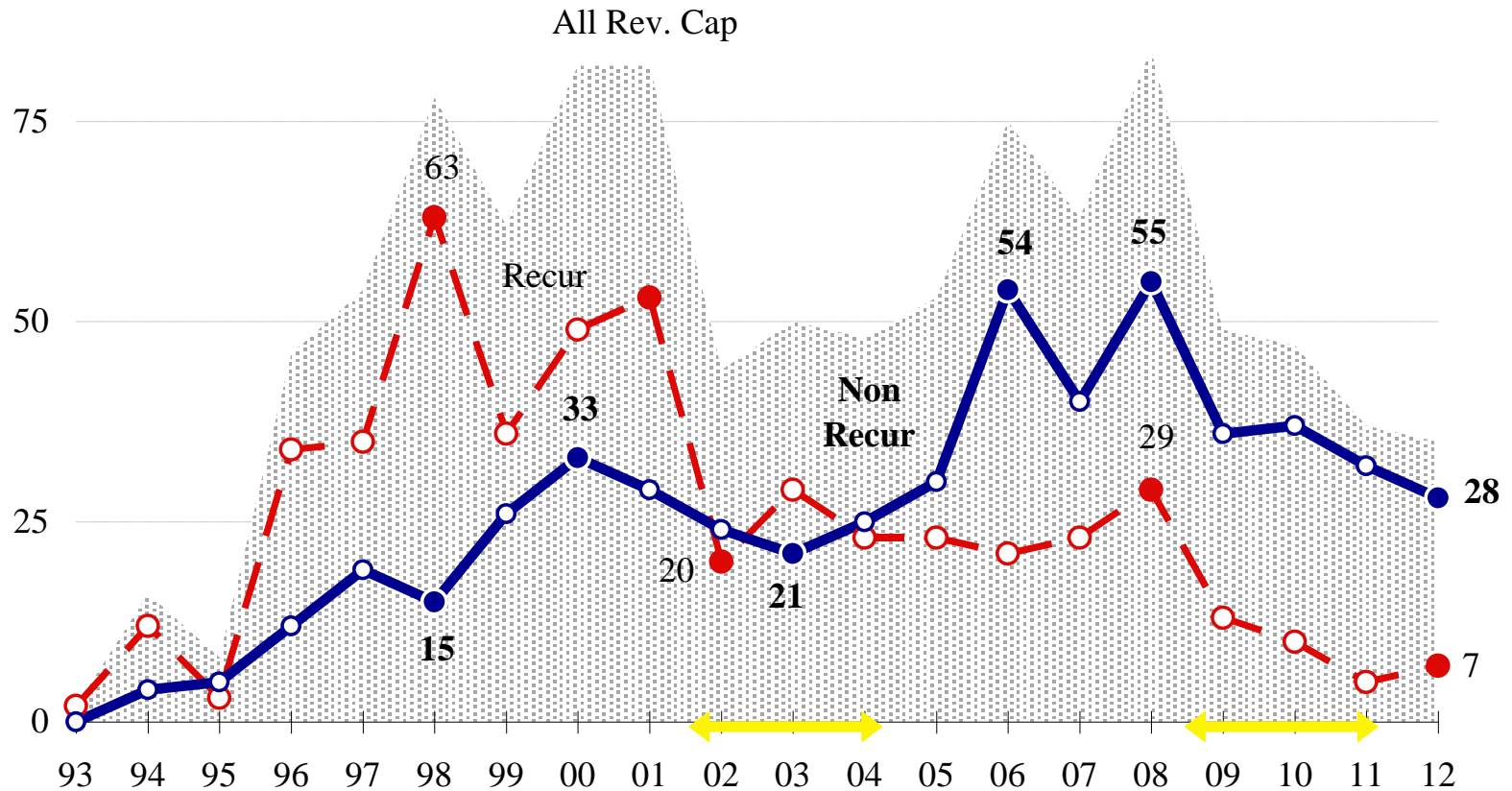
Era I: State subsidizes bonding.....



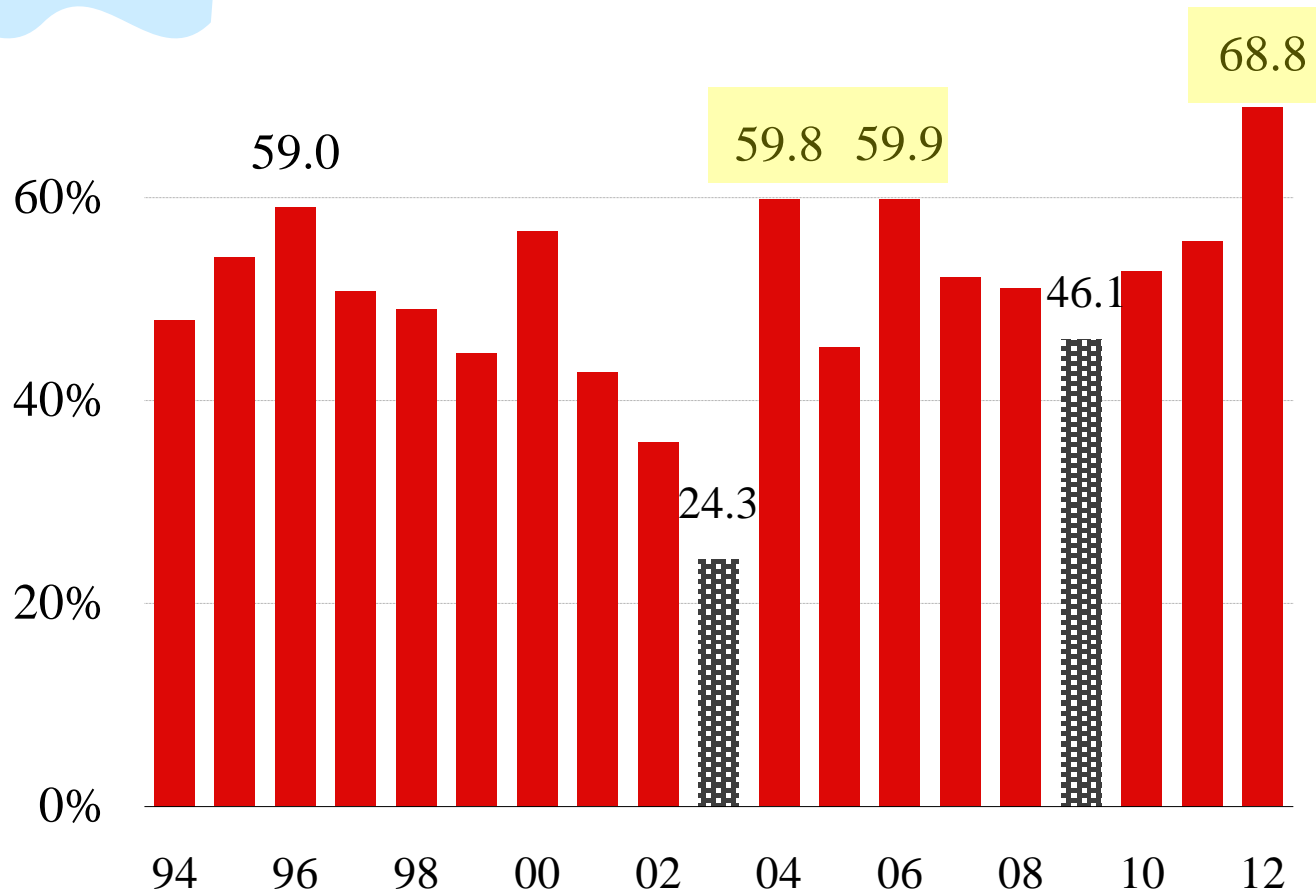
Era I: Debt vs. revenue cap referenda



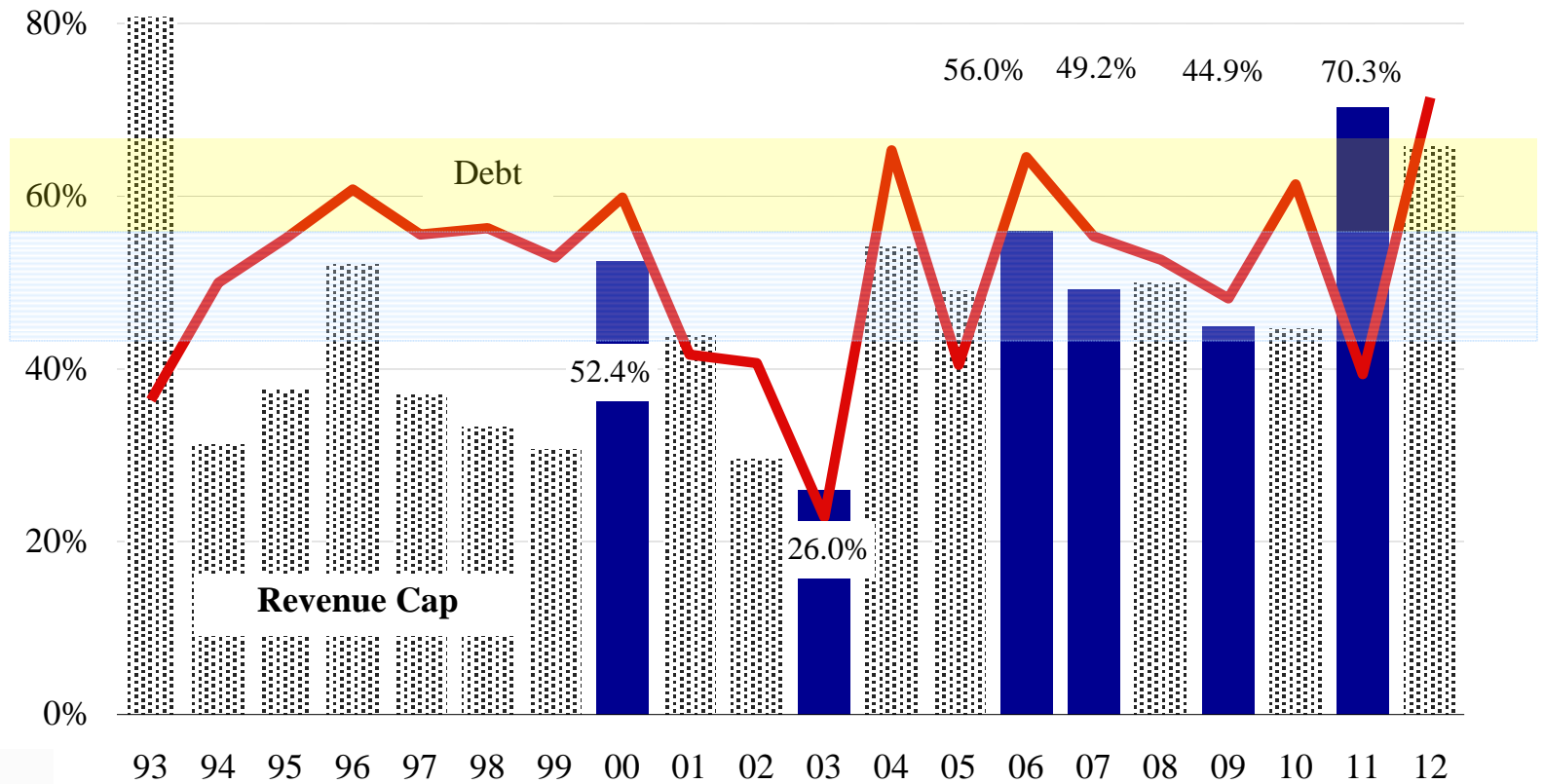
Era II: Rev. cap referenda (especially...)



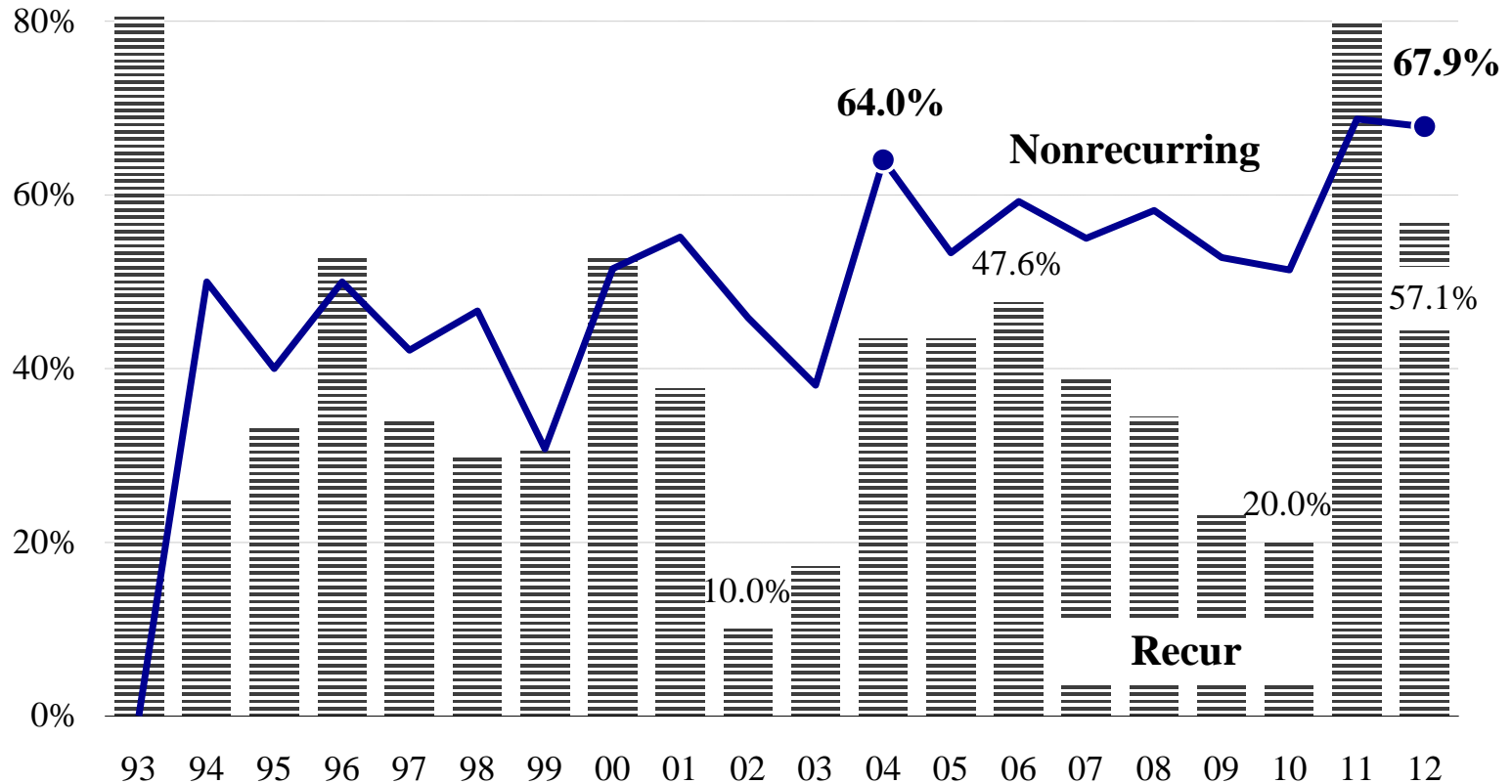
Success rate of all referenda



Success: Debt vs. revenue cap



Success: Recurring vs. nonrecurring





What might we know about referenda?

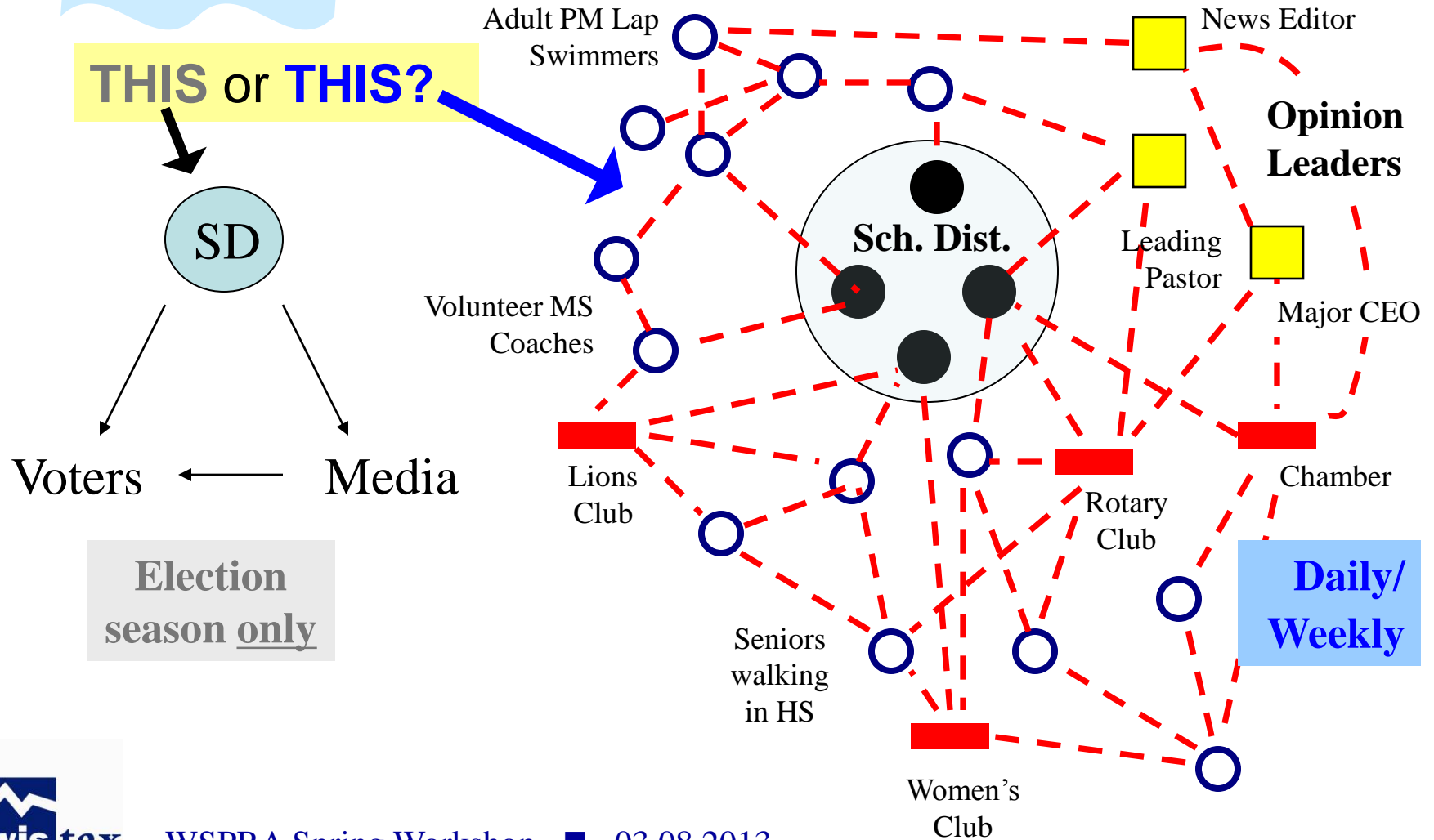
Numbers

- Debt referenda down, but stabilized
- Referenda number rise, fall with economy
- Revenue cap referenda \geq debt
- Tot. no. revenue cap referenda not surging
- No. of nonrecurring referenda rising

Pass Rates

- Debt $>$ Revenue Cap
- Nonrecur $>$ recur
- Expansion $>$ recession
- Presidential election better?

How build resources in comm. network?



Questionzzz.....?



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