



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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### Assembly Democrats introduce resolution to study debt-free college

Wisconsin Democrats join national effort calling for debt-free college resolutions

MADISON – Today three Assembly Democrats announced their support of debt-free college. They plan to introduce a joint resolution that will establish a debt-free college commission to establish the return of debt-free college, where students can pay for college without taking out any loans. Wisconsin Democrats joined ten other states in calling for debt-free college resolutions recently.

“We have a student loan debt crisis in Wisconsin,” said Assistant Assembly Democratic Leader Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point). “Our state ranks third in the nation for the highest percentage of graduates with student loan debt. The longer we wait to act, the more this crisis grows. Our economy is lagging and Wisconsin’s hard-working families are paying the price. A return to debt-free college will fulfill the most basic promise that previous generations were offered: if you work hard and play by the rules, you can graduate college without being burdened by debt. Right now the American Dream is out of reach for too many hard-working people. A return to debt-free college will make the American Dream a reality for everyone.”

“Wisconsin Democrats have been leaders on making college affordable,” Rep. Cory Mason (D-Racine) said. “Not only do we need to tackle the student loan debt held by over 800,000 Wisconsinites by allowing people to refinance their student loans like they can a mortgage or car loan, but we also must pull together stakeholders to study debt-free college. With the average student graduating with \$28,800 in debt in Wisconsin, this significantly affects their ability to buy a house, a new car, start a business, or get married and have a family. The debt-free college commission will address college costs, financial aid, and state support for our universities so hard-working people have a chance to succeed without being strapped with student loan debt.”

“The historic cuts Republicans made to our University System in the most recent budget were some of the worst in the country,” Rep. Dana Wachs (D-Eau Claire) said. “As the ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities and a strong supporter of the UW-System, I feel that we owe it to our children and to the future of Wisconsin’s economy and workforce to invest in higher education and make it more affordable. By bringing these leaders together, we will begin an important discussion that will have a long-lasting positive impact for students, parents, and employers that is vital to our economic future and success of our state.”

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