



*For Immediate Release*  
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## **Rep. Shankland: Here's what Gov. Walker didn't tell you while signing higher education bills**

Madison – Yesterday, Governor Scott Walker signed a series of bills into law as part of his so-called “college affordability legislative package” with great fanfare at various venues throughout Wisconsin. After reviewing the governor’s releases to the media regarding the bill signings, State Representative Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement regarding the statistics Governor Walker points to in his release:

“While the governor attempts to save face with recent graduates and young professionals by signing a series of so-called ‘college affordability’ bills into law, it’s important to look at what he hasn’t said or done. Governor Walker didn’t tell you that in his first budget, Republicans increased tuition by 11% while gutting colleges and universities. Under his last three budgets, the UW System has lost a total of \$795 million in state aid and technical colleges have lost \$203 million in state aid – all thanks to Republican legislators and the governor.\*

“I also take issue with Governor Walker claiming to champion need-based aid– when under his leadership, 36,000 technical college and UW System students qualified for need-based financial aid in 2015 but did not receive any due to Republicans’ inaction.\*\* The governor forgot to tell you that funding levels for need-based higher education grants remained frozen at 2011 levels in his 2015-17 executive budget. Injecting \$500,000 into the grants program for technical college students with a waiting list of over 34,700 technical college students breaks down to approximately \$14.40 in aid per qualifying student who were denied aid last year. And his plan leaves UW students out in the cold. I wouldn’t call that substantial, or meaningful action on a growing state and national crisis. Every Democrat on the Joint Finance Committee voted to increase these grants for the UW System, and every Republican voted against it. It’s clear who is really championing college affordability for students, and who is hiding their inaction.

“Finally, the Governor and Republican legislators’ weak package of bills are convenient for an election year, but do not meaningfully help the nearly one million student loan borrowers who are currently making payments on their student loan debt. Republican legislators continue to stonewall and vote against a Democratic bill to allow borrowers the opportunity to refinance their loans at lower interest rates and provide tax relief to borrowers. Given Republicans’ track record of gutting our UW System and technical colleges, freezing financial aid, and holding up real action on student loan debt, it’s clear this legislative package is more about election year politics than it is about helping our next generation of leaders.”

\*Excluding debt service. Source: LFB memo regarding higher education funding found [here](#).

\*\*Source: LFB memo regarding need-based financial aid grants found [here](#).

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