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Senate backs bill giving students more say

[Nate Beck](#), Copy Editor • September 12, 2013 • [Leave a Comment](#)

Student senate unanimously supported a bill that could give statewide student government a bigger voice in picking UW-system student reps at its first meeting of the year, Monday.

Senate supports Wisconsin Senate bill 157 — a bill that could require the governor to appoint student regent members recommended by UW system student governments.

“I fully support this resolution,” Eau Claire student senator Tyler Will said. “I think this bill going through the senate is going to be great for student governments across the state.”

Currently, the governor isn't required to appoint student regent members selected by student governments. State Senator Fred Risser, D-Madison, introduced SB 157 in late April. He said the bill aims to encourage student governments to participate in selecting student regent reps.

“The bill would encourage student governments to make recommendations,” Risser said. “It would also give the governor a pool of people to choose from. It's about encouraging student governments to participate in the political process.”

Governor Scott Walker chose UW-Platteville student Chad Landes to replace former student member Katie Pointer in late August.

Walker initially picked fellow Platteville student Joshua Inglett, but an aide in Walker's office discovered Inglett had signed a recall petition, and he was replaced with Landis.

UW-Platteville Student Body Vice President Joe Sigwarth said Pointer came to Platteville to encourage students to apply for the open regents spot. He said he helped Inglett fill out his application for the position. “Josh was pretty upset after he found out he wasn't picked,” Sigwarth said. “So we met with our state assemblyman and state senator and found out the governor had to appoint someone else from Platteville.”

Rissel said, as the law stands now, the governor can appoint any student in the UW system. If SB 157 passes, the governor will need to pick from a student government-recommended field of applicants.

Eau Claire student senator Jake Wrasse spoke in support of senate's resolution during Monday's meeting. “As the law reads right now, (Walker) is only required to maybe look at the nominations that we put forth,” Student senator Jake Wrasse said. “The law reads the governor may consider appointments. The bill literally changes the word may to shall. So whoever we put forth will be appointed.”

Student Body President Bryan Larson said student members are often appointed based on political views, not UW student government decision.

Students apply for an open student regent slot and student governments recommend applicants to the

governor. He said Eau Claire senate didn't make a regent recommendation this year.

Eau Claire senate supports SB 157 because the bill would give student governments more say in picking regent reps, Larson said.

"Student senate supports the bill because it would give student governments more authority, not as a response to what happened at Platteville," Larson said.

The Board of Regents is made up of 18 members; 16 are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state legislature. Two of the 16 members are student members serving staggered two-year terms.

State legislators held a public hearing on the bill in late August and it is still under review in the Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges. Eau Claire senate's passed resolution will be sent to Governor Walker and a slew of Wisconsin state senators.

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