



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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*For Immediate Release*  
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**Reps. Shankland, Wachs Introduce Legislation to Increase Higher Ed Financial Aid**  
*Over 36,000 UW & Tech College students denied aid in 2014-15 due to lack of state funding*

MADISON – Today, State Representative Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) and State Representative Dana Wachs (D-Eau Claire) introduced legislation that would increase state funding for need-based financial aid for UW-System and Wisconsin Technical College students. State funding levels for the aid program remain at the same level of funding as 2011. The proposal, which was sent out for co-sponsorship to members of the state legislature today, would provide financial aid to the 36,358 eligible students who were denied need-based aid they qualified for during the 2014-2015 academic year. After circulating the bill for co-sponsorship, Rep. Shankland released the following statement:

“With 70% of Wisconsin college students graduating with student loan debt and Wisconsin ranking third in the nation for student loan debt, it is past time for state lawmakers to take meaningful action on this issue. Student loan debt is weighing down our economy and holding people back from achieving their dreams. Due to Republicans’ insufficient funding of this valuable financial aid program, over 36,000 students were unable to receive the financial aid they qualified for and needed last year, and many turned to student loans to finance their education.

“The Wisconsin Grant program awards need-based financial aid to qualifying students at our state’s colleges and universities. Unfortunately, under Governor Walker’s leadership, funding for the program remains at the same level today as it was in 2011. I am happy to introduce this legislation with Rep. Wachs, ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities, to ensure individuals have the support they need to access higher education. This legislation will pay dividends in the future, as more students will be able to receive an affordable education and enter our state’s workforce with the skills they need – without the threat of being saddled by debt for decades to come.

“While Governor Walker may tell you he is acting on this issue, his anemic plan simply puts a Band-Aid on a growing statewide and national crisis. Taking up this legislation in addition to Assembly and Senate Democrats’ bill to allow student loan refinancing would be a big step towards making college affordable for our next generation of leaders and workers.”

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