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Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 635
Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
December 8, 2021

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for holding this public hearing today and giving me the opportunity to speak to you in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 635. I would like to thank Senator Kooyenga for asking me to work with him on this important legislation.

Those who serve in the military and their families make great sacrifices for our state and nation. One of the challenges faced by service members and their families is being required to relocate to a new post. Unfortunately, if the spouse or parent of a student at one of our state's public technical colleges or universities is relocated outside of Wisconsin due to their military service, it may cause the student to lose their state residency status. This would result in the student being required to pay nonresident tuition even though the student was treated as a resident prior to the relocation.

AB 635 corrects this problem by allowing relocated service members, their spouses, and dependents to be considered residents which permits them to pay in-state tuition at UW System universities and Wisconsin Technical Colleges if they can demonstrate that they are bona fide residents during the relocation period. In addition, if dependents are able to make this demonstration they will continue to be considered residents of this state after the relocation period has ended. This will help in situations such as when a military parent retires from military service to another state outside of Wisconsin.

This bill is another way we can say thank you to service members and their families by making college more affordable for them. Also, by encouraging our service members and their families to attend college in Wisconsin, it increases the likelihood that they stay in our state and become part of our workforce after they complete their education.

Mr. Chairman and members, I ask for your support of this legislation and thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today.