

One Wisconsin Now: Wisconsin Republican Party Opposing Common Sense Student Loan Debt

Posted on Friday, May 12, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MEDIA CONTACT

Mike Browne, Deputy Director
mike@OneWisconsinNow.org
(608) 444-3483

MADISON, Wis. — Gov. Scott Walker's Wisconsin Republican Party gathers for their annual convention this weekend, at the same time students graduate from University of Wisconsin schools across the state. According to the latest available statistics, the Badger state has risen to fifth highest in the nation for percentage of college graduates with student loan debt with GOP control of all levers of government. Yet, according to One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross, the Wisconsin GOP from the federal delegation to Governor to state legislature has opposed common sense student loan debt reform, like allowing borrowers to refinance their loans, just like you can with a mortgage.

"The irony of the Republican Party, convening on graduation weekend is rich," said Ross. "They control all of state and federal government, their policies have left students deeper in debt and they're standing in the way of common sense reforms to help."

Under Republicans complete control of state government, Wisconsin has risen to the top five in the nation for percentage of college graduates with student loan debt at 70 percent. The average graduate leaves school with nearly \$30,000 in debt, according to the latest statistics.

Since 2011, under the policies of Gov. Scott Walker and the Republican-controlled

legislature, funding for higher education has been cut by record amounts, financial aid has been dramatically underfunded leaving tens of thousands of eligible students without help, and tuition for University of Wisconsin students has been increased by double digits.

In addition, Walker, as a member of the state legislature, voted for budgets that resulted in tuition increases of 60 percent at the state flagship university and dramatic increases at other University of Wisconsin System schools. According to financial disclosures, he is reaping what he has sown. With two children having recently completed college, state and federal ethics disclosures reveal Walker has roughly \$100,000 in student loan debt at an interest rate of over 7 percent.

Yet Walker and his GOP colleagues have consistently opposed reform at the state and federal level that could help lower borrowers monthly payments, by allowing them to refinance their student loans, just like you can with a mortgage. Walker and state legislative Republicans have, since 2013, prevented consideration of the Higher Ed, Lower Debt Act that would create a state based authority to help borrowers refinance student loans. Meanwhile in Washington D.C., Republicans have voted against efforts to allow federal student loan borrowers to refinance their federal student loans with the federal government.

Meanwhile Donald Trump, who settled a class action lawsuit brought by students of his Trump “University” for \$25 million days before his January inauguration, and his administration are repealing consumer protections for student loan borrowers by allowing debt collectors to charge borrowers exorbitant fees on top of their loan payments. In addition, rules requiring companies that service student loans to prioritize helping borrowers and abide by basic consumer service and protection standards in order to win federal contracts are also being repealed.

Ross concluded, “The class of 2017 graduates, like so many before, worked hard to get their education. And an increasing percentage taking on the personal responsibility to pay for it needed to use student loans. The politicians gathering for the Republican Party of Wisconsin’s annual convention – who will no doubt loudly proclaim their support for education, personal responsibility and hard work, and market based solutions — remain opposed to common sense reforms, like allowing loans to be refinanced. It’s, in a word, ‘sad’ that they refuse to back up their words with actions.”

#



One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.

152 W. Johnson St. #214 · Madison, WI 53703 · mail@OneWisconsinNow.org · (608) 204-0677

[Unsubscribe](#)