

Sen. Baldwin: Bipartisan effort to save Perkins Loans College Affordability Program obstructed in Senate

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin today went on the Senate floor to save the Perkins Loan Program, but her request to pass bipartisan legislation was blocked. The authorization for this critical college affordability program will expire on Saturday, September 30th unless Washington stops obstructing Senator Baldwin efforts and acts on her bipartisan legislation.

“The Perkins Loan Program expires in two days, yet our bipartisan legislation to extend this critical college affordability program has been obstructed,” said Senator Baldwin. “Students and families are depending on Washington to get the job done, not block college affordability. I will continue to fight to extend this support for America’s students, and I hope Americans urge their Senators to join this bipartisan effort and act now to protect the future of this program.”

Unless Congress acts, approximately 1,500 colleges and universities across the country will not be able to make these low-interest loans in future years leaving approximately 700,000 students without access to an important source of financial aid. In Wisconsin, the program provides more than 23,000 low-income students with more than \$57 million in aid.

Yesterday, Senator Baldwin wrote to leaders of the Health, Education, Labor and

Pensions (HELP) Committee urging them to immediately act to save the Perkins Loan Program.

The Perkins Loan Program Extension Act is also led by Senators Rob Portman (R-OH), Bob Casey (D-PA) and Susan Collins (R-ME), and cosponsored by Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Al Franken (D-MN), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Ron Johnson (R-WI), Jack Reed (D-RI), Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) have also cosponsored the legislation. U.S. Representatives Mark Pocan (D-WI) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY) introduced companion legislation in the House that has gained over 220 cosponsors. The bipartisan effort to extend the federal Perkins Loan Program has also received support from organizations and universities in Wisconsin and across the country:

“At a time when more college graduates are so clearly needed, the Perkins Loan program provides critical support to students with economic need, said Ray Cross, President, University of Wisconsin System. “It offers flexible repayment and generous forgiveness options that are public-service oriented. In Wisconsin, the impact is significant: in 2015-16, the Perkins Loan program provided \$25.5 million in loans to 13,672 UW System students. We appreciate Sen. Baldwin’s action and support on this critical issue for our students and campuses. An extension will provide students and their families with greater clarity and certainty until an HEA reauthorization occurs.”

“Wisconsin recognizes the value and importance of the Federal Perkins Loan program which supports 27,513 students throughout our state, 3,599 of whom are students at UW-Madison,” said Derek Kindle, the Director of Student Financial Aid at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “Senator Tammy Baldwin’s leadership, along with her Republican and Democratic colleagues from Wisconsin’s delegation, demonstrates their dedication to champion the cause for students in Wisconsin and across the nation. We are deeply concerned about what the loss of this critical need-based aid program will mean for our students and troubled that no replacement program or funding exists.”

“I would like to thank Sen. Baldwin and others in the Wisconsin Congressional delegation for their leadership on this important issue,” said Dr. Rolf Wegenke, President of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU). “Perkins Loans offer a critical campus-based aid program providing financial aid administrators an important tool to encourage completion and

retention. To let the loan expire would have a negative impact on low-income students. WAICU-member colleges and universities match these funds – a sterling example of having skin in the game.”

The bipartisan effort to extend the federal Perkins Loan Program has also received support from the Association of American Universities, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, American Council on Education, American Veterinary Medical Association, American College of Nurse-Midwives, Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, Association of Research Libraries, Board of Directors for the Indiana Association of College and University Business Officers , Coalition of Higher Education Assistance Organizations, Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area, Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, Council for Opportunity in Education, Kentucky Association of Student Receivable Officers, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) National Association for College Admission Counseling, National Education Association (NEA), NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, National Association Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), Nebraska Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, New Jersey Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association (NYSFAAA), Oklahoma State University, Pennsylvania Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, University of California System, University of Maryland System, United Negro College Fund, Utah Association of Student Loan Administrators, and Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (WASFAA).

An online version of this release is [available here](#).