

One Wisconsin Now: Assembly Republicans missing an opportunity to make bipartisan progress by tackling student loan crisis

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Higher Ed, Lower Debt Act is a Common Sense Solution With Strong Approval Across Partisan Lines

MADISON, Wis. — A letter sent to Gov. Tony Evers today by Wisconsin State Assembly Republicans is another missed opportunity to score a bipartisan victory for hard working Wisconsinites. Omitted from the list of policies touted by the GOP is a common sense plan to help student loan borrowers refinance their loans, just like you can with a mortgage.

Under the previous administration of Scott Walker, Wisconsin achieved the ignominious distinction of becoming a top ten state in the nation for the percentage of college graduates with student loan debt.

The following are the statements of One Wisconsin Now Program Director Analiese Eicher:

“If Republicans want to make bipartisan progress on a critical issue, helping hardworking student loan borrowers refinance their loan just like you can with a mortgage is a common sense solution.

“Wisconsinites all across the state, of all political persuasions and of all ages know student loan debt is a crisis for themselves, their families and our economy and they support helping borrowers refinance as a solution.

“The good news is that there is the *Higher Ed, Lower Debt Act* to do just that. All that’s missing is for Republicans in the legislature to join with Gov. Evers and Democrats to deliver a bipartisan win for Wisconsin.”

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The *Higher Ed, Lower Debt Act* includes a state based plan to help borrowers refinance their loans and would expand an existing state tax break for education expenses to include student loan debt payments. The legislation has been introduced in every legislative session since 2013 and was unanimously supported by Democrats in the state legislature. Gov. Tony Evers has also indicated his support for helping borrowers refinance student loans at lower interest rates. It is also strongly supported by the public, [according to opinion research](#) with 79 percent of those surveyed supporting, “a plan to allow student loan borrowers to refinance their loans, just like you can with a mortgage.” A mere 9 percent were opposed.

Support was strong across partisan lines with 85 percent of those identifying as Democrats, 70 percent of Republicans and 82 percent of independents favoring the proposal. In addition, 79 percent of men and women supported student loan refinancing along with 74 percent of voters age 18-29, 71 percent of voters age 30-45, 87 percent of voters age 45-65 and 77 percent of voters age 65 plus. Nationally the student loan debt crisis has saddled over 44 million Americans with over \$1.4 trillion in debt, including roughly one million Wisconsinites with a collective \$24 billion plus in education loan obligations.