

One Wisconsin Now: Student loan debt in Wisconsin continues to outpace national average, according to latest research

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MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin remains in the top ten states in the nation for the percentage of graduates with student loan debt, according to the [14th annual report on the burden of student loan debt](#) on college graduates released today by The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS). State graduates also ran high nationally for the amount of their debt, with an average burden of nearly \$32,000 for the class of 2018.

“College graduates in Wisconsin continue to be hit hard by the \$1.6 trillion student loan debt crisis. Nearly two out of three class of 2018 graduates are starting out from behind with tens of thousands of dollars in debt,” said One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Analiese Eicher. “This is not a sustainable state of affairs. We need reform and we need it now.”

According to the study on the class of 2018, the 64 percent of graduates with debt in Wisconsin puts the state in the top ten in the nation. The amount of debt being carried by these graduates also ranks high compared to the rest of the nation. Wisconsin class of 2018 graduates leaving college have an average debt load of \$31,705.

Under complete Republican control of state government, policies were implemented that drove Badger state graduates and their families deeper into debt. Tuition was increased by double digits, financial aid was so grievously underfunded that tens of thousands of students eligible for financial aid received none and common sense

legislation to help borrowers refinance loans, just like you can with a mortgage, has been voted down in every session since 2013.

Eicher said that there are hopeful signs for students and borrowers after years of Republicans refusing to take any action to help. Gov. Tony Evers, members of his administration, State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski and Democratic state legislators have all committed to reforms to help current student loan borrowers. And as part of the budget process, Evers and Democrats in the state legislature also supported significant increases in state financial aid for eligible students. Republicans who control the state legislature voted the financial aid boost down.

Eicher concluded, "It's not a surprise that, with \$1.6 trillion in debt nationally, student loan debt is a huge issue facing Wisconsin. It is a disappointment that Republicans' rabid partisanship won't allow them to join in helping solve this crisis."