

Rep. Shankland: Statement on Joint Finance Committee's vote on UW system

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MADISON – Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point), ranking member on the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities, released the following statement today in response to last night's vote by Republicans on the Joint Committee on Finance to cut the governor's proposed University of Wisconsin System budget by more than half:

“For years, our UW System has been deliberately underfunded and neglected, and Governor Evers demonstrated great leadership by proposing an additional \$150 million investment in public higher education. The people of Wisconsin were counting on that funding to invest in Wisconsin students' futures. For every one dollar we invest in our UW System, there is a \$23 return on an investment. That's real money in our communities, from Main Street to the jobs on campus.

“That's why I'm so disappointed that Republican legislators on the Joint Finance Committee voted to slash the governor's UW budget in half. According to the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, this is not even an inflationary increase. In my own community, we have seen significant challenges surrounding budget deficits, and we're not alone. That increase in state funding would have meant jobs, economic security, and access to affordable higher education for thousands of people statewide.

“UW System President Ray Cross called the budget committee vote ‘a kick in the shins,’ and I couldn’t agree more. While other states are investing in higher education, Republicans on the budget committee couldn’t even commit to an inflationary increase for the colleges and universities that support Wisconsin students and the research that our farmers and other employers depend on.

“I am thankful to Governor Evers for his leadership in investing in the UW System, and I know he will keep pushing for funding the tuition freeze and investing in our UW System.”