

Gov. Evers: Releases statement regarding Board of Regents vote tonight

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers released a statement regarding the University of Wisconsin (UW) System Board of Regents vote tonight.

“In my final address as a regent, I talked about independence, autonomy, and the importance of higher education institutions and their governing bodies not serving as the extension of any politician, administration, or political party. That’s a belief I still carry with me today as governor. Never in modern American history has it been more important for higher education institutions, including the UW System Board of Regents, to have the opportunity to make the very best decisions for students, faculty, staff, and campuses without the fear of political intimidation, threats, or retribution.

“This vote today represents a vast overreach by a group of Republicans who’ve grown exceedingly comfortable overextending, manipulating, and abusing their power to control, subvert, and obstruct basic functions of government. Republicans are unconstitutionally obstructing UW pay raises and investments that were already discussed, negotiated, and approved in the biennial budget the Legislature passed and I signed in July—these never should’ve been part of this conversation, period, because Republicans need only choose to release today what we all approved of months ago. Wisconsin also has readily available state resources we could invest right now, today, in our UW System to prevent further closures and layoffs—a fact of which legislative Republicans are more than well aware but refuse to do anything about, having rejected, for example, my proposed investments for the UW-Madison engineering building on two separate occasions already. Legislative Republicans similarly could have spent the last several months advancing the very legislation at

issue in these negotiations but instead declined to exercise the singular constitutional authority unique to their branch of government—the ability to pass a bill.

“This exercise has been about one thing—the relentless political tantrums, ultimatums, and threats of retribution by legislative Republicans, most especially Speaker Robin Vos, his negotiation-by-bullying tactics, and general disdain for public education at every level.

“I disagree with the regents’ decision today. I am disappointed and frustrated with this result, this proposal, and the process that led up to this point. It is also my expectation that every individual who promised in this process that the important work of building diversity, equity, and inclusion and making sure our campuses are welcoming and work for everyone would not be diminished by this action will be working in earnest to make good on that commitment. And I’m going to make damn sure that they do.”