



Media Release

For Immediate Release
July 25, 2019

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Rep. Shankland and Sen. Hansen Introduce “Reaching Higher for Higher Education” Legislative Package

MADISON – Today, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) and Sen. Dave Hansen (D- Green Bay) introduced the “Reaching Higher for Higher Education” legislative package. The six bills contained within the package send a strong message to current and future students and educators in Wisconsin that they are supported and valued.

Rep. Shankland released the following statement:

“Wisconsin was once a leader in higher education, and now we must seize the opportunity to lead again. The promise of the American Dream is falling out of reach for too many, and our students deserve to have the same opportunities that their parents and grandparents had. We need to restore the promise of affordable higher education in every region of our state, and that starts with funding higher education grants for every technical college student and UW student on the wait list.

“For every dollar we spend on the UW System, we receive a \$23 return on investment. That’s why we are introducing legislation to invest additional funds in the UW and technical colleges and to fund all current and future tuition freezes. We also propose creating a Blue Ribbon Commission to set us on a sustainable path forward in funding and strategy. The Blue Ribbon Commission would pay particular attention to rural and under-resourced institutions, giving them a voice in the process as they set out a long-term vision and explore new funding sources for higher education.

“For too long, politicians have meddled with our vital UW System while slashing budgets and deliberately not funding tuition freezes and state financial aid grants. Our colleges and universities across Wisconsin have been hit hard, especially in rural areas. With several campuses facing significant budget deficits, the sustainability of our state’s economic engine is at risk. It’s time to lead on investing in our technical colleges and universities, ensuring the sustainability of our state providing educational and economic opportunities for our next generation of leaders, and restoring the promise of the American Dream.”

Sen. Hansen added, “Under Scott Walker, Republicans cut over \$1 billion from our UW campuses and higher education. We have seen the impact those cuts have had, not only on each campus but on the ability of students to graduate on time and on the quality of their education. This is just part of an overall pattern of neglect we have seen from the Republicans these past eight years. Despite the election of Governor Evers, they still don’t seem to have gotten the message that people want real change—and a big part of that is reinvesting in their kids’ public higher education.”

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