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May 12, 2020

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SEN. SMITH STATEMENT ON GOVERNOR’S STUDENT DEBT TASK FORCE

MADISON – This week, Governor Tony Evers announced that Senator Jeff Smith (D – Brunswick) will be a member of the Governor’s Task Force on Student Debt.

On January 22nd, during the State of the State Address, Governor Evers announced the creation of the Task Force on Student Debt. Following this, Governor Evers signed [Executive Order #67](#), which established the Task Force, chaired by Department of Financial Institutions Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld.

Senator Smith will be joining a diverse group of elected officials and stakeholders in the fields of higher education and financial institutions to “assess the causes of student debt, provide long-term strategies to reduce education-related debt, find ways to prevent abusive practices by loan companies and improve loan education,” according to the Department of Financial Institutions.

Senator Smith currently serves as the Ranking Member on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Revenue and Financial Institutions. When Senator Smith served in the State Assembly during the 2007 and 2009 legislative sessions, he was the Vice-chair of the Financial Institutions Committee and Vice-chair of the Higher Education Committee. Prior to being an elected official, Senator Smith was active with the Governor’s Task Force for Educational Excellence, the Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association Board, the Department of Public Instruction’s Parent Leadership Corps and the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools.

Senator Smith released the following statement regarding his role on the Student Debt Task Force:

“For too long, student debt has financially crippled graduates and their family’s potential to do more, from owning a home to preparing for retirement. The impact student loan debt has on families and Wisconsin’s economy is only getting worse and demands our immediate attention. While we grapple with the current public health crisis, the Governor’s Task Force on Student Debt is all the more urgent to find ways for Wisconsinites to achieve financial stability, while accessing a quality, affordable education.

“In my various public service roles, I’ve made it my mission to ensure students throughout the state have an equal opportunity to learn. I’m looking forward to working collaboratively with higher education and financial experts to tackle this serious issue. I’m hopeful these conversations on the Student Debt Task Force will translate to meaningful policy changes to support Wisconsin families and enable future educational and financial success.”

The first meeting will be held virtually tomorrow, Wednesday, May 13. The meeting is open to the public. To attend the meeting, dial (510)338-9438 and when prompted for the meeting access code, enter 297 317 691. For a full list of future meetings please visit the Student Debt Task Force website.

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