
WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

**Joint Finance Committee
Testimony on 1999-2001 Budget Bill (1999 AB 133)
April 15, 1999
by
Terry Craney, President
Wisconsin Education Association Council**

Thank you Co-chairpersons Burke and Gard and members of the Joint Finance Committee for holding this public hearing on the 1999-2001 biennial budget bill. My name is Terry Craney, I am President of the Wisconsin Education Association Council.

The biennial budget bill has grown in complexity and size over the years. It contains many issues of interest to educators throughout the state. I would like to provide some brief comments from the perspective of educators in Wisconsin.

We are enthused by the budget's support for lowering class sizes. The proposed expansion of the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) class size reduction program is a welcome addition to the budget. Research has established that lowering class sizes improves student performance, especially among the most needy students in low-income districts.

The SAGE program is a proven success. Now let's expand the program to all eligible schools in the state and make sure as many children as possible benefit from the program. We also encourage the Legislature to keep the 50% low-income eligibility rate for SAGE schools.

In addition, we applaud the governor's continued commitment to investments in

educational telecommunications and technology through the TEACH program. We are pleased to see that a solution has been offered to continue the BadgerLink program. We also support funding levels in the budget for standards and testing as requested by the DPI and favor the efforts to get more teachers certified through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

There are, however, some other issues in the budget bill that cause concern for educators in Wisconsin:

Removal of Non-fiscal policy:

We would like to commend efforts made by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau to compile a list of non-fiscal policy items in the budget. We would also like to thank the co-chairs of the Joint Finance Committee for agreeing to remove items that relate to bargaining over the creation of charter schools, approving alternative waivers for teacher licenses, starting school after September 1st and the closing of schools.

A few of the Fiscal Bureau items remain in the budget. We call upon legislators to do the right thing and remove these items from the budget so that they may receive a full and fair public review by the education committees of the Legislature. Specifically, we request the following items be removed from the budget bill. (Note the pages listed correspond with the LFB summary of the governor's budget bill):

WEAC Supports Removal of These Remaining Non-fiscal Policy Items In the Budget Bill:

- **School Contracting Authority** (p. 505, item #3), (p. 215, item #7 (in part)). This item allows school boards to contract out for education services and the impact of such a decision on wages, hours and conditions of employment would be a prohibited subject of bargaining. WEAC opposes this policy.

- **Charter Schools -- Instrumentality of the School District** (p. 499, item #8). This item repeals the requirement that for-profit charter school established by the Common Council in Milwaukee be instrumentalities of the school district. WEAC opposes this policy.
- **Charter Schools -- Petition Process Modifications** (p. 499, item #9). This item allows those denied a petition to create a charter school to appeal that decision to the Department of Public Instruction. WEAC opposes this policy.
- **Milwaukee Charter School Academic Standards** (p. 499, item #7). This item requires charter schools in Milwaukee to administer the same tests as regular public schools. WEAC would support this item as a separate bill.
- **School District Referendum Scheduling** (p. 503, item #1). This item requires school districts to limit referendum elections to spring and fall. WEAC opposes this policy.

Relief from Revenue Caps:

While we applaud the governor for extending temporary relief from the revenue caps for declining enrollment school districts, we believe the time has come for the Legislature to repeal state-imposed revenue caps. Legislative proposals are now pending before both houses of the Legislature to provide much needed relief from revenue caps. Short of absolute repeal, WEAC supports revenue cap relief measures dealing with issues such as school security measures, debt service costs, special assessments, technology, four-year-old kindergarten and summer school pupil counts just to name a few. These are all examples showing that revenue caps are not working and are harming the quality of our public schools.

Funding Special Education:

The revenue caps force school districts to pit programs that support the most needy students against other educational programs. Districts are forced to make the choice between funding special needs children or cutting back on other general education programs or extracurricular activities. The governor's decision to freeze special education aid and to repeal the state's

commitment to fund 63% of those costs will only make matters worse. WEAC calls upon the Legislature to live up to its commitment to fund special education programs. We also ask that you allow school districts to raise revenue outside of the revenue caps to bridge the gaps caused by increasing costs in special education.

WTCS Funding:

WEAC believes that the Wisconsin Technical College system (WTCS) works effectively to train Wisconsin's workforce. WEAC also believes that the Wisconsin Technical College System ensures that Wisconsin's businesses have highly skilled workers. The Wisconsin Technical College System has a long, although largely untold history of being a strong, stable system that helps maintain Wisconsin's strong and stable economy.

WEAC urges you to support the general state aid increase requested by the WTCS for a 4.4% and a 4.8% increase. This request represents approximately a \$5 million and a \$6 million dollar increase in each year of the biennium, and reflects what the technical colleges need to meet the requests for training and re-training coming to them from Wisconsin businesses and workers. Under current funding conditions, the WTCS is forced to meet its funding needs by "taxing to the max." Many WTCS districts are close to reaching the maximum 1.5 mill rate allowed by law. This will further erode the state's commitment to property tax relief.

One thing is absolutely certain. WTCS graduates, over a short period of time, return more state income tax dollars than the state invests in the Wisconsin Technical College System. Funding the Wisconsin Technical College System should not be considered an expense, but a wise investment in the health of Wisconsin's present and future economy.

Children's Health and Safety -- Prevention of Smoking by Minors:

The governor's budget shows improved commitment for early childhood excellence and Head Start programs. We also have a strong belief that an unhealthy child is a poor learner. WEAC is a participant in the Tobacco Free Coalition and the TRUST Campaign for the use of the tobacco settlement funds. The TRUST group, headed by the efforts of Senator Judy Robson and Representative Frank Urban, is calling for \$50 million of the settlement funds to be used for comprehensive prevention and education programs.

Organizations participating in the TRUST campaign are working together in support of funding for statewide, comprehensive programs and services that will reduce the addiction, disease, disability, and premature death caused by the use of tobacco. It is time to prevent children from beginning a lifelong addiction to tobacco products.

Repeal of the Qualified Economic Offer Law:

Finally, let me end by appealing to the members of this committee, the Legislature and the governor to bring an end to the Qualified Economic Offer law.

Between 1966 and 1977, the Wisconsin Education Association Council and Wisconsin Federation of Teachers members went on strike in 50 school districts throughout the state. The most famous was the 1974 Hortonville strike, where 84 teachers lost their jobs.

Twenty-five years ago this spring the Hortonville School Board fired almost all of the district's teachers after they went on strike because the board refused to reach a fair settlement. Twenty-five years ago, the schools in Hortonville reopened with replacement teachers. The strike and its aftermath threw the lives of the "Hortonville 84" into stress and turmoil.

The mass firings provided a dramatic example of how a flawed collective bargaining law

led to an abuse of power by an unreasonable school board. The firings contributed to a political climate for change by showing the people of Wisconsin how much disruption a bad law can cause. The Hortonville experience so energized WEAC members that, over the next two years, they mobilized to win a new, fair law through intensive political action and lobbying efforts.

From 1978 to 1993, school employees and school boards in Wisconsin peacefully settled labor contract disputes by referring impasses to neutral third-party arbitrators.

Teachers' voices are once again ignored at the bargaining table. The QEO law unfairly singles out teachers and destroys their collective bargaining rights. When combined with the revenue caps, this law is forcing school districts to make painful decisions to cut or reduce programs that affect the quality of education in their schools. Employers are hiding behind the law rather than bargaining. These laws need to be repealed. The Hortonville strike highlighted the unfairness of the laws in the 1970s and led to the Legislature adopting a bargaining system that worked well until the QEO was imposed in 1993. Now we need a new legislative solution to correct this unjust situation of the 1990s.

Therefore, the Wisconsin Education Association Council supports full repeal of the Qualified Economic Offer law.

The QEO is unfair

- The QEO singles out and penalizes one group of public employees, a majority of whom are women.
- The QEO penalizes employees who are planning to retire by giving them a life sentence of reduced pensions.

The QEO destroys collective bargaining

- Employers are allowed to unilaterally impose a QEO forcing employees to "take-it or leave-it." The employees only recourse for dispute resolution is to engage in job actions.

- The QEO blocks discussion of creative solutions to the challenges facing public schools (such as proposals dealing with class size and teacher preparation).
- The QEO discourages consensus bargaining.

QEO harms the quality of public education

- The QEO reduces collaboration between labor and management resulting in increased tension in the workplace which interferes with educational quality.
- The QEO discourages the best and the brightest from entering and staying in the education profession.
- The QEO contributes to lower employee morale.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today.

April 15, 1999

~~Judiciary Hearing~~
Madison WI

Joint Finance Comm.

Sherry Quamme
Associate Administrator
Patient Care Services
Columbus Community Hospital, Inc.
1515 Park Ave.
Columbus WI 53925
(920) 623-2200

Wisconsin AHEC System
Chair, Board of Directors

RE: **Speaking in Favor of \$700,000 Increase In Funding For The Wisconsin AHEC System**

What is AHEC? What does AHEC do?

The Wisconsin Area Health Education System, or AHEC, aims to improve the distribution, supply, quality, utilization and efficiency of health personnel in rural and underserved communities in Wisconsin.

The WI AHEC is administered through the UW Medical School. The work of AHEC is done through four regional, community-based organizations.

Local AHEC's act to join together the resources of the UW Medical School with communities that have a health related need.

How has AHEC Impacted Columbus and Columbus Community Hospital?

- Placement of medical students and selected family practice residents at our rural hospital. Dr. Mary Davis was a family practice resident at our hospital and is now a family practice physician living and working in our community. Her presence has been instrumental in recruiting other physicians. Medical students continue to have rotations to our rural site.
- Senior nursing students have a semester of clinical nursing experience at our rural hospital. 7 of these students have chosen to accept employment at our hospital because of these rotations. They would not have considered us without this AHEC supported program.
- Physical Therapy students from UW Madison, UW LaCrosse and Carroll College utilize our hospital through AHEC supported clinical rotations. Physical Therapy Assistant students from Blackhawk Technical College in Janesville receive training at our hospital and we were successful in employing a student in a position that was open for two years prior the start of this clinical rotation.
- Occupational Therapy students also have clinicals at our hospital.

- These are professionals in growing shortage that are recruited because of the clinicals they have at our rural site. Without the clinicals, they wouldn't give us a second thought.
- High School Students take Certified Nursing Assistant courses supported by AHEC programs in partnership with the hospital and local nursing home. The students then have exposure to a health occupation plus a way to earn income to help support their college education.

Other AHEC Benefits To My Community and Area:

- Facilitated continuing education opportunities
- Functioned as a convener and facilitator to address health care access or workforce needs. Example: Nurse Practitioner student clinical that resulted in employment for two Nurse Practitioners in separate physician clinics.
- Provided training and technical assistance for accessing computer-based health information and library resources. Located a PC workstation in a physician clinic for use by nurse practitioner students, medical students. Available for nursing and physical therapy students.
- Through timely access to health information, have been able to improve patient care.
- Provided technical assistance for community health improvement projects.

What Does Columbus Community Hospital and Wisconsin Need AHEC for in the Future? How will Wisconsin be Impacted If There Is A Loss of Funding?

- Expansion of medical and health professional education in rural and underserved communities like Columbus. We are facing a severe health professions shortage. Students who have clinical experiences at rural and underserved sites give consideration to practicing at those sites. There is a network of systems across Wisconsin now supported by faculty from the University of Wisconsin, our technical colleges, many of our private colleges and a host of community health care providers. AHEC has nurtured and created this. It will be lost if the funding is lost.
- Coordination of community-based activities across regions
- Decreased communication among health professional training programs and community providers would be an outcome of decreased funding. These are the volunteer preceptors of the students. AHEC provides distance learning, technology communication access and continuing education along with health care services support. (Farm health assessments at Feed Mills, Migrant worker health services, dental care access in Wautoma for underserved, South Madison Health Clinic services and others.) Programs would close, cease to exist.
- Without some increase in funding, regional AHEC centers will have to cut programs and services and, maybe even close.

Relevant Facts & Figures To Consider:

- Wisconsin AHEC System is requesting total state funding of \$1.5 million per year to maintain current programs and services.
- Current AHEC System budget is \$1.56 million per year

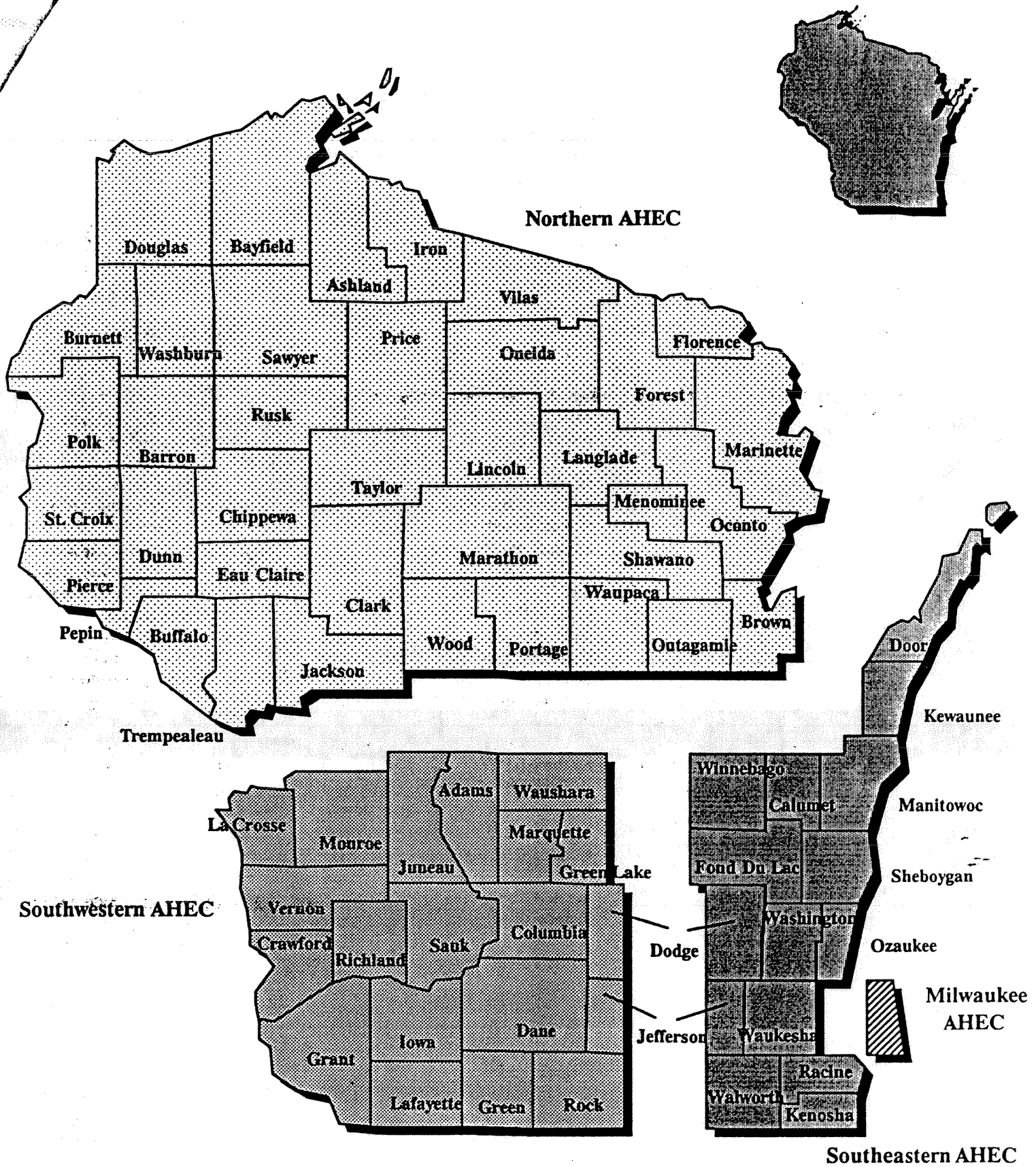
\$763,000 in federal money

\$800,000 in state funds

- Federal money is ending September 30, 1999
- Request:
 - Maintain \$800,000 per year appropriation in Governor's budget
 - Increase of \$700,000 per year in state funds, please

Please understand the need to support the Wisconsin AHEC System through the increase of \$700,000 per year to continue to statewide and regional, community based AHEC programs and projects that result in better health care services to rural and underserved populations of our state.

Thank you to all committee members for your attention to the health related needs of rural and underserved areas of Wisconsin.



STATEWIDE WISCONSIN
AHEC AREAS

Joint Finance Committee Testimony 4/15/99
Kathryn A. Borowski, Director of Financial Aid
Edgewood College, Madison, WI

WISCONSIN TUITION GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE. AS A FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS, I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOU FOR THE PAST CONSIDERATION AND SUPPORT YOU HAVE PROVIDED FOR FUNDING WISCONSIN GRANTS TO STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

A GREAT DEAL OF MY TIME IS SPENT WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS. THAT TIME IS SPENT NOT TALKING ABOUT THE FINANCIAL AID MONIES THEY ARE GOING TO RECEIVE, BUT RATHER HOW THEY ARE GOING TO PAY FOR THE GAP BETWEEN WHAT THEY RECEIVE AND WHAT IT COSTS TO GO TO COLLEGE. AS THAT GAP WIDENS EACH YEAR, IT BECOMES MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT FOR ALL OF US.

STATE OF WISCONSIN STUDENTS NEED WI GRANT PROGRAMS. STUDENTS ATTENDING PRIVATE COLLEGES DESERVE TO BE TREATED EQUITABLY IN THIS AREA. MY JOB TODAY AND YOUR JOB IN CONSIDERING THIS PARTICULAR BUDGET ITEM, IS TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO INSURE FUNDING FOR THIS PROGRAM IS FAIR. EACH YEAR, OVER 20,000 PRIVATE COLLEGE STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR W.T.G.-- BUT ONLY 10,000 RECEIVE IT.

IN ORDER TO INSURE EQUAL TREATMENT TO ALL STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF COLLEGE THEY ARE ATTENDING, YOU MUST PASS NOT ONLY THE 6% INCREASE PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR, BUT THE ADDITIONAL \$2.3 MILLION INCREASE EACH YEAR OF THE UPCOMING BIENNIUM. THIS MEASURE WILL THEN ALLEVIATE THE INEQUITY FROM THE 99-01 BUDGET.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

**TESTIMONY
BEFORE JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE
FROM
MATT TUTAJ
448 W. MIFFLIN ST. #3
MADISON, WI 53703**

(EDGEWOOD COLLEGE STUDENT)

SUBJECT: WISCONSIN TUITION PROGRAM

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Joint Finance Committee.

My name is Matt Tutaj. I am a '95 graduate of Cedarburg High School and currently am a junior majoring in Political Science at Edgewood College here in Madison. The only way I could have ever hoped to attend a private school - which I felt was the best option for me at the time was because I received financial aid. Between my grants and student loans and two jobs, somehow I have been able to make it this far. As a Political Science major, I am especially interested in the process here today. My purpose for being here, however, is because I understand a funding inequity which could jeopardize WI Tuition Grant funding in the next biennium for students attending private colleges in Wisconsin may be occurring. I have relied on WI tuition grant as one of the larger awards I receive at Edgewood - so have a lot of the guys on my soccer team.

I hope you will carefully review the proposed funding for this program and not only pass the 6% budget increase proposed by Gov. Thompson, but also consider an increase of the additional \$2.3 Million in each year of the biennium which is the only way to insure not only myself but all those attending private colleges are treated equally to those attending the UW and technical colleges.

Thank you.

Testimony Presented to the Joint Finance Committee, Thursday, April 15, 1999

Good day. My name is Joel Rodney and I am Campus Executive Officer and Dean of UW-Washington County in West Bend. Thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of the Governor's budget recommendations for the University of Wisconsin.

I would specifically like to focus today on the concept of "continuing appropriation."

"Continuing appropriation" simply allows revenue to be spent as it is received. Currently, the amount of tuition revenue that can be spent in a given year is capped. If revenue should exceed the cap due to, for example, tuition received for a new distance education course, a legislative hearing is required before these funds can be collected and spent to support the new course.

This management tool would allow campuses like UW-Washington County to spend revenues as they are earned – just as it's done in business –in order to respond rapidly to market conditions and student demand for specific programs.

Let me give you an example. UW-Washington County's and UW-Milwaukee's collaborative Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Administration is changing lives in Washington County. Busy, hard-working residents of our community recognize the fact that they need to continually upgrade their education to meet the needs of an evolving employment market. But the obligations of work and family make commuting 45 miles each way to the nearest four-year UW campus impractical. So this innovative collaboration between our two-year campus and UWM has brought the four-year degree program to them.

Washington County leaders helped to structure the curriculum offered by both UWWC and UWM. John Torinus, CEO of Serigraph, Inc., and Chair of the program's Advisory Board calls it an "excellent application of the 'New Wisconsin Idea' under which education is delivered where and when the busy people of this state need it during a career of life long learning."

Currently, there are 48 individuals who are in the BAOA program at UWWC. According to area employers, the collaborative BAOA program already is a huge success, in addition to offering its students tremendous savings in their education dollars.

The UW Washington County is effective in meeting the needs of adult learners seeking lifelong education near their work and families. But the demands for these services are changing much faster than a two-year appropriation process can respond to. Our growing business community needs programs in computer science and information management added to our current array. The additional resources to support an innovative collaborative degree program shouldn't come at the expense of other program areas especially when we are generating the funds ourselves that could be reinvested in our program.

If we are to continue to meet the needs of the local community and the demands for specific courses and programs, UW-Washington County needs the flexibility of continuing appropriation. This is not a tool to raise tuition; rather it will be another step in allowing us to continue to be more entrepreneurial.

Thank you for this opportunity to talk with you today on the importance of this management concept for the University of Wisconsin and UW-Washington County.

Date: April 13, 1999

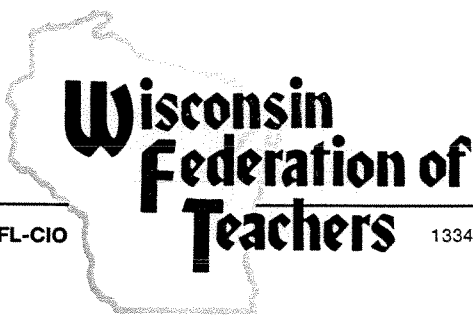
To: Members of the Joint Finance Committee

From: Wisconsin Innkeepers Association

Re: 1999-2001 Biennial Budget Bill; tourism provisions

The Wisconsin Innkeepers Association is asking your support on three key issues in the Biennial Budget Bill.

1. We ask that you consider supporting the School Calendar initiative (Bill Sections 2066 and 2108). We estimate the sales tax revenue from hotels alone from August 15th to August 25th with enactment would increase by \$1,000,000.00. Hotels make up less than 30% of the average tourist's daily expenditures. The Joint Finance Committee can send a statement to the rest of the Legislature by supporting this critical issue in the budget.
2. We also ask your support for the increase of \$8 Million over the biennium funded by tribal gaming revenues (Bill Sections 343 and 554) for tourism marketing and assisting local events with JEM grants. This is an investment in our state's fastest growing revenue generator.
3. Finally, we ask you to support those communities negatively impacted by tribal gaming by assisting in the creation of the Gaming Economic Development and Diversification Grant and Loan Programs (Bill Sections 203, 205, 207 through 209 and others).



AFT/AFL-CIO

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CAROL WEIDEL, President

<http://www.wft.org>

- WFT COUNCILS:
- Graduate Assistants
- Higher Ed
- K-12
- PSRP
- State Employees
- WTCS

Legislative Testimony

Date: April 15, 1999

To: Joint Committee on Finance

From: Ken Opin, WFT Lobbyist

RE: Budget bill – state employee issues

The Wisconsin Federation of Teachers shares the same position on elementary and secondary education and on Wisconsin Technical College System issues as WEAC and therefore I will not repeat what you have already heard.

WFT represents 5 state employee bargaining units, two bargaining units of UW graduate assistants, and two unions of UW faculty and academic staff.

There are two items relating only to state employees, which we wish to bring to your attention:

1. **A new prohibited subject of bargaining applicable to the state as employer.** In the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission section of the budget, two new prohibited subjects of bargaining were inserted. You have removed one, regarding Choice and Charter Schools, to be introduced as separate legislation. WFT would urge you to also remove the other item from the budget and have it introduced separately.

It would prohibit collective bargaining over any requirements related to a new point-of-service coverage option” applicable to state employe group health insurance coverage and managed care plans. This is clearly a policy issue. It has not been discussed with any of our local unions and should have the full scrutiny of separate legislation.

2. **Public Defender: deletion of 12 paralegal positions.**
The governor’s budget proposes to delete 12 paralegal positions, which WFT would urge you to retain. The use of paralegals saves the state money by doing work that would otherwise need to be done by a Public Defender (also represented by WFT) or outside counsel.

April 15, 1999

To the Legislators of Wisconsin and Governor Thompson

I would like to speak on behalf of all regular education students concerning your budget proposals. I would like to speak for this group of students because it feels to me that they and their parents have lost their voices in the battle over the limited funds in our public schools. The school revenue caps passed in recent years by the Thompson administration, coupled with the myriad of unfunded and underfunded special education mandates, have negatively impacted the education of the majority of students which we refer to as 'regular ed kids'.

My name is Nancy Roth and I have a son who attends Lodi Middle School. I understand and support the idea that special needs students deserve an appropriate education, but not at the cost of taking money from the 85% or so of regular education students. All students are special, and the state has no right to force schools to choose between spending money on one group of students over another. Right now the State of Wisconsin is forcing public schools to serve the needs of those labeled special ed by literally taking money out of regular ed or school building/maintenance. The State does this by not fulfilling its legal, statutory obligation to pay 63% of special education costs. Now the Governor, in his budget, is proposing to remove even that hollow promise to pay those costs, just as the Federal Government has increased its special education mandates. This logically results in more commitments for public schools, with the implication of ^{absolutely} no funding. Where does Mr. Thompson think the money will come from? The answer is fairly clear to me, the Regular Education Program.

My son is a regular ed kid, and he is special too! He also deserves an education tailored to his needs, just as much as any special ed labeled student does. To illustrate my point, 4 years ago in Lodi, money was already becoming scarce due to the revenue caps. Our school was forced

to choose between lowering class size for all 5th graders, or cutting our one, part-time Gifted and Talented Coordinator. In this instance, our administrator chose to address the needs of the many over the needs of the fewer gifted kids. Our Gifted and Talented Coordinator was shifted to regular ed. My son just happens to be a student whose gifted needs were determined not to be special enough to warrant attention. If my son were deemed in need of special education services through an IEP, in our small school district he would have found 14 teachers ^{and 11 educational assistants} to meet his needs. Our school psychologist told me today that 95% of his time is spent on special education tasks. That example is only one of many that could be told. This took place when that state came at least a little closer to meeting its special education obligations. Now you fund only 35 % of your responsibility, force us to operate under revenues you froze in 1994-95, and all the while, the costs carried by the individual schools increase with each new federal mandate. Schools have no choice but to meet special education needs first, ^{because the law demands this,} and they must get the money from somewhere. The good of the few has taken precedent over the good of the many. . . a situation created by the government under the Thompson administration. It seems to me that this clearly translates into larger class sizes and less services for my and many other people's "regular ed" children. This is clearly NOT FAIR!

As my representatives, I beg you to consider the education of all of Wisconsin's children, and care enough to pay your statutory share of special education costs, so that we don't pit child against child and parent against parent. Strike any suggestion in the budget that the state will renege on its duty. Fund special education in the way that you promised, and while you are acting for the good of future generations, free public education from those repressive spending limitations that are destroying our ^{public} schools!

Thanks for your consideration
Nancy H.G. Roth
7625 Bonetti Rd
Dane WI 53529

April 15, 1999

Hello, my name is Shannon Mork and I am a senior at UW-Madison, majoring in geography. My family is from the Mukwonago area and two of my sisters are also graduates of UW-Madison. I am a member of Student Badger Action Network (Student BAN), which is the student chapter of Badger Action Network (BAN), the Wisconsin Alumni Association's legislative advocacy program. On behalf of the Student BAN, I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts with you today and to express Student BAN's support for Governor Thompson's budget recommendations for UW-Madison.

As these last few weeks before graduation wind down, I have been thinking about my experience and time at UW-Madison. I am happy to say that when I look back on these past four years, I realize what a great experience it has been. I just finished the process of selecting a graduate school to attend and throughout the process professors across the country spoke highly of the quality of education at UW-Madison. This was exciting for me to hear because I have always thought UW-Madison was an excellent university but to hear that from professors in North Carolina and Colorado confirms what I have always believed.

I was glad to see that Governor Thompson's budget recommendations include an increase in spending for libraries, which have not received an increase in the past ten years. As a geography major, I realize the necessity of having up-to-date scholarly journals and reference materials at UW-Madison when I research today's important issues. I also was excited to see an increase in spending for advising. Being able to meet with advisors who can effectively assist and guide us to a timely graduation would greatly meet the needs of all students.

As a student, I believe the tradition of excellence I experienced at UW-Madison may be in jeopardy for future generations if the state does not prioritize higher education in this budget. Not only will the quality of a UW-Madison education be threatened, but there will also be a threatened availability of an affordable public education.

In Wisconsin and many other states over the past 20 years, state tax dollars have made up an increasingly smaller percentage of state university systems. For example, in 1973-74 the state funded 44 percent of UW-Madison's operating budget, compared with just 27% today. However, in recent years other states have begun to re-invest in higher education-but Wisconsin has not. Increasingly, tuition is being used to supplement the state's failure to adequately fund Wisconsin's public universities. This is unacceptable. The harsh reality is that many of Wisconsin's bright and talented students are financially unable to continue their education.

Just as important as making UW-Madison affordable, the quality of the education that students and their families pay for must be maintained. I see examples of quality being threatened in the areas of academic advising, UW libraries, both of which I mentioned earlier, as well as biological laboratories, and faculty salaries and state need-based financial aid. The biological laboratories are out-dated, hindering our faculty and staff's ability to successfully prepare students like myself for future careers in science research and development. The faculty and staff that we depend upon to teach and prepare us for life after graduation are underpaid compared to their peers and we will lose quality faculty to other schools that offer higher salaries. Finally, state need-based aid is failing to meet the needs of students and, as a result, our students are graduating with an average of \$12,000 in debt.

The state must address these factors immediately if UW-Madison's tradition of excellence is to be maintained. On behalf of Student BAN, I urge you to help maintain UW-Madison's tradition of excellence by supporting the "Madison Initiative," which over the next two years combines a shared investment of \$30 million by the state and students with \$20 million in private matching.

Thank you.



Shannon Mork

Member of Student Badger Action Network

Julie Schreiner
430 Spring St
Lake Geneva WI 53147
414-241-3713

April 15

"My name is Julie Schreiner and I attend Badger (Lake Geneva/Geneva City) Union High School in Lake Geneva, WI. I feel the school revenue caps have harmed my school district. A referendum was finally passed in last 2 years to add much needed addition and space for students. However, this was much delayed. Our schools have been overcrowded for the past 6+ years. Now, these much needed additions are poorly supplied and staffed. We do not have ample computers for classrooms or our library because the addition has gone over budget. Before the edition we had classes in the cafeteria because there weren't enough classrooms for all the students. We also still suffer lack of library books, and outdated and lack of textbooks for classes. We still have overcrowded classes, I have had classes with 45 students in them, this is twice what the class size should be. I am also forced to choose between classes because of lack of teachers. Many classes are only offered one hour, and thus I feel how decreased the quality of my education. More teachers would allow for more classes to be offered, increasing the quality of education at Badger. Changing the school revenue caps would allow for many of these problems to be change, and allow for happier

Petey Hornemann
609 Chatham Ter.
Madison, WI 53711

We represent the students of Wisconsin. Every day, we go to the schools restricted by the revenue caps. And, as you've heard, every day we see the results.

The effects are disastrous. The future is even more grim. ~~We want~~ After a long tradition of excellence, Wisconsin's schools are deteriorating. Their quality decreases every year.

~~We ask for~~ Ultimately, we would like the ~~budget~~ ^{revenue} caps to be repealed. But, we realize that that is not a viable solution now is it really ~~within your power~~ ^{realistic} to make such a drastic change in a single budget.

What we ^{is} ~~ask~~ ask is that a few items be removed from under the caps. These things are subject to change & cannot be allotted for in a fixed annual budget. First, we would like building maintenance to be removed. Our schools are falling apart, and many are even unsafe to students. Second, special education. Pitting the needs of regular ed & special ed students against each other leads only to unhappy ends. Third, security. A school should never have to choose between keeping its students safe from gangs or falling ceiling tiles. Fourth, technology. These days, ~~states~~ a computer education is vital to a comprehensive education. ~~Fifth, fixed cost~~

Our requests may seem numerous. ~~But~~ But
our cause demands. Every day, our school's
decline a little more. With each program that
gets cut, each art class, each sports
team, our school's get worse + worse. With
every broken window, useless heating system,
and ~~deep~~ rotten roof that remains un-
fixed, students lose pride in their schools. ~~we~~
~~are~~ ~~losing~~

- Peter

Wernemann

Peter Koechley 2521 Chamberlain Ave
~~150~~ Madison, WI 53705

I go to an excellent high school. I have been very lucky. I fear that the ~~the~~ elementary + middle schools ~~will be~~ that I know will not be so lucky. ~~Fast~~ Looking at my school, I see only deterioration + _____ in the future.

What have I ~~my~~ gained from high school? Well, I think that I grew much as a person from ~~participating~~ ^{playing} ~~participating~~ ^{bassoon} in my school's concert band. ~~My~~ My youngsters will not have ~~that~~ the same opportunity. The school's instruments are falling apart. We haven't bought a new instrument since the revenue cap was instituted.

My friends ~~who play strings~~ ^{throughout the music department} ran, with their teacher, a four-year fundraising campaign, selling hams door-to-door in order to buy working music stands + chairs.

~~I~~ I have taken a few art classes during high school. I have loved them. Due to curriculum sharing and curriculum ~~sharing~~ writing time ~~given to~~ that used to be given to ~~the~~ the art teachers in my district, our art teachers and art curriculum have been praised across the country. Due to the revenue caps, these curriculum enrichment efforts have been cut.

As ~~the~~ art grows + changes, and new things are discovered about ^{art} education, our curriculum will get more + more

outdated. New ideas will be shared less & less. Our art program will lose its dynamism.

The arts reach out to students in the same way that sports do. They help kids who do not excel academically. They give students the chance to shine who would otherwise ~~be~~ drop through ~~the~~ in the cracks.

Please change the revenue caps so that school boards have the flexibility to fund the arts as they need to be funded.



WISCONSIN EDUCATIONAL MEDIA ASSOCIATION

**Joint Finance Committee Hearing
Thursday, April 15th, 1999
Room 411 South, State Capitol**

**Statements by Vonna J. Pitel, Library/Media Director/District Coordinator
Cedarburg School District and Representative of the
Wisconsin Educational Media Association (WEMA)**

**To: Senator Brian Burke and Representative John Gard, Co-Chairs, and members of
the Joint Finance Committee**

Today's School Library Media Center

First of all, I would like to emphasize that school library media centers have changed greatly in the past 10 years and are now transforming their collections and facilities into information and technology centers within schools. My facility and many others around the state have been expanded to provide more room for technologies and a variety of groups and activities which are an integral part of the instructional program. We cannot refer to the school library that we remember years ago in today's environment of expanded resources. School library media specialists are providing more instructional, curriculum and staff development services than ever before. Many school library media specialists are the technology coordinators for their building or district in addition to providing the traditional reader's advisory services. There are two important budget priorities that impact the quality and services of school library media programs.

Common School Fund

WEMA supports the full restoration of the Common School Fund distributions solely for the underwriting of school library media programs. The Common School Fund provides all or nearly all of the funding for materials purchased in most Wisconsin school library media programs, including my own. In the 1997-99 biennium Common School fund distributions to school library media programs were capped at \$14.3 million, routing about \$5 million annually from the Fund to TEACH technology grants. The loss of over \$4 per students was particularly disadvantageous to small, rural schools and other districts where additional funding is not provided.

Technology is only one instructional resource today. The Internet and CD-ROMs do not provide for every information need that students have. Good literature collections, nonfiction books and reference sets need to be purchased through the school library media budget, which is provided through the Common School Fund. Book collections need to be updated annually, and with the

cap on the Common School Fund I am not able to purchase the variety of titles I did before. The cost of paperbacks and hardback titles continues to increase each year. Faculty and students enjoy reading newspapers and magazines for leisure reading during the day. The exciting and challenging part of my job is assisting staff and students to determine which is the best resource for a particular information need. For example, the other day a book with a criticism, biographical material and essays about an author was the best resource for a student, while on another day I helped a student search the Internet for the medical term "phantom pain."

I feel I provide a leadership role in the integration of technology in my school building, but I also promote different genres of books and teach reference collections along side the technology software. The teachers in my building expect students to use a variety of resources they have evaluated carefully for their research projects. *Please help school library media centers keep a balanced collection of print and media along with technologies. We cannot sacrifice one for the other.*

BadgerLink Databases

BadgerLink is benefiting not only the research needs of my students and staff but everyone in a community that uses a public library or has a connection to the Internet with a registered Internet service provider. Since its inception I have been teaching every class completing research in the library media center how to access this database of full-text magazines and newspapers, and teachers are learning to use BadgerLink through staff development sessions after school. Every freshmen this year was given introductory lessons so they would use it for many of their research needs. I could never afford to purchase the periodical or newspaper databases individually. A statewide license is a great way to provide access to the widest spectrum of patrons.

Students in our Future Problem Solving Class receive a list of magazine articles to use for research. Many of the titles are specialized magazines in a subject area such as oceanography. I helped our students locate magazine articles for an upcoming assignment. We found that over half of the titles were not indexed in our local database. We used BadgerLink and found that all but one article in the EBSCOhost Database. This is an excellent example of how Badgerlink expands the access to quality information resources for student research. Access to online resources such as BadgerLink teaches students technology skills they will use for their advanced education and lifelong learning. Although school library media centers need access to this wonderful resource, I want to clarify that it is not a substitute for print, CD-ROM and other media I purchase through the Common School Fund. *I encourage you to provide funding for BadgerLink in the 1999-2001 biennial budget.*

Thank you for taking time to read and hear my testimony.

Sincerely,



Vonna J. Pitel