



2015 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 78

January 8, 2016 – Introduced by Senators C. LARSON, VINEHOUT, RINGHAND, CARPENTER, WIRCH and LASSA, cosponsored by Representatives SHANKLAND, MASON, WACHS, GENRICH, BERCEAU, BILLINGS, BROSTOFF, CONSIDINE, GOYKE, KOLSTE, MEYERS, OHNSTAD, POPE, SARGENT, SINICKI, SPREITZER, SUBECK, C. TAYLOR, BOWEN, RIEMER, KESSLER, HEBL and ZAMARRIPA. Referred to Joint Committee on Legislative Organization.

1 **Relating to:** requiring the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization to
2 immediately appoint a committee, to be known as the Commission on
3 Debt-Free College, to study and report on the feasibility of providing a
4 debt-free college education to all residents of this state.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

The resolution requires the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization to immediately appoint a committee, to be known as the Commission on Debt-Free College, consisting of two members of the majority and minority parties in the assembly; two members of the majority and minority parties in the senate; two representatives of employers who maintain headquarters in this state, one of whom must be a representative of small employers with 50 or fewer employees; two representatives from public institutions of higher education located in this state; one representative of a public two-year institution of higher education located in this state; one representative of a technical college located in this state; and four professional economists or higher education advocates with expertise in increasing access to institutions of higher education and workforce development.

The commission must study the feasibility of establishing a state program to provide debt-free college education to all Wisconsin residents. For purposes of the study, a debt-free college education would apply to all Wisconsin residents who are students and to all Wisconsin public institutions of higher education and programs. The commission must also study the impact of a debt-free college education on all institutions of higher education and programs in this state. The commission must

also investigate whether other states have established such programs, the different methods that may be used to fund such a program, any federal legislation relating to such a program, and all studies that propose strategies for lowering the overall debt burden of college students.

Under the resolution, the commission must deliver its findings to the assembly and senate majority and minority leaders and to the cochairpersons of the Joint Committee on Finance before January 3, 2017.

1 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the joint committee
2 on legislative organization shall immediately appoint a committee, to be known as
3 the Commission on Debt-Free College, consisting of 2 members of the majority and
4 minority parties in the assembly; 2 members of the majority and minority parties in
5 the senate; 2 representatives of employers who maintain headquarters in this state,
6 one of whom must be a representative of small employers with 50 or fewer employees;
7 2 representatives from public institutions of higher education located in this state;
8 one representative of a public 2-year institution of higher education located in this
9 state; one representative of a technical college located in this state; and 4
10 professional economists or higher education advocates with expertise in increasing
11 access to institutions of higher education and workforce development. The
12 commission shall study the feasibility of establishing a state program to provide
13 debt-free college education to all Wisconsin residents. For purposes of the study, a
14 debt-free college education would apply to all Wisconsin residents who are students
15 and to all Wisconsin public institutions of higher education and programs. The
16 commission shall also study the impact of a debt-free college education on all
17 institutions of higher education and programs in this state. The commission shall
18 also investigate whether other states have established such programs, the different
19 methods that may be used to fund such a program, any federal legislation relating
20 to such a program, and all studies that propose strategies for lowering the overall

1 debt burden of college students. The commission shall deliver its findings to the
2 assembly and senate majority and minority leaders and to the cochairpersons of the
3 joint committee on finance before January 3, 2017.

4 (END)