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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Tuesday, May 25th, 1999, 10:04 am

From: PATRICIA M. HANSON (PHANSO1@AMFAM.COM)

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Address:

Phone: 608 837 9560

THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE EQUITY FOR ALL THE TAX PAYERS IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN. PUT A SALES TAX OUT THERE SO THOSE THAT HAVE MORE \$ AND CAN SPEND MORE \$ WILL PAY MORE TAX.. PROPERTY TAX HAS NEVER HAD FAIR DISTRIBUTION IN WIS. THE MIDDLE CLASS THAT OWN HOMES SEEM TO BE CARRYING THE BURDEN...AND NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE ABOUT THAT. WHEN I GET DONE PAYING THE MORTGAGE ON MY HOME...I WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE THE SAME MONTHLY PAYMENTS JUST FOR THE TAXES...I WILL NEVER BE DONE PAYING!

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Tuesday, May 25th, 1999, 8:08 am

From: Barbara Barth (bbart@landolakes.com)

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Address: 725 S. Leona Ave. Richland Center, 53581

Phone:

My husband and I have recently relocated to WI. We currently live in Richland County, which has the reputation for being the poorest county in WI. It has become evident that the numerous unrepaired, unpainted, unattractive, homes that litter the hillsides are kept that way to keep the residents taxes down. If you make improvements on your home you are assessed additional taxes.

When we had our new home assessed one of the first things the assessor had to say was: "you had better start saving tax money now".

I do not understand the WI logic of building as many government buildings as possible with resident tax money.

I feel the entire tax structure should be evaluated and the lobbying for big business be halted.

You are draining resources from people who obviously don't have them and offering discounts and tax shelters to the people who do.

You must encourage many businesses to this state with those breaks.

You need Jesse Ventura! What happened to government by the people FOR the people? It is not supposed to be government by the big business FOR big business!!

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Tuesday, May 25th, 1999, 8:25 am

From: Guest

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Address:

Phone:

Dear Wisconsin Lawmakers, Please remember who you work for, Wisconsin Taxpayers. I'm married, work fulltime, own a home in Monona and have no children. I'm rather tired of being broke because of taxes imposed on me because business's don't or won't accept their fair share of taxes. I'm also tired of seeing the elderly forced into giving up their homes because of the increasing taxes. I'm simply asking that the republican dominated legislature to do the right thing. Make business pay their fair share, and take this unfair tax burden off of Wisconsin taxpayers. This state was once known as a progressive state, it's unfortunate that this state is becoming known as regressively taxed state.

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Wednesday, May 26th, 1999, 2:11 pm

From: Guest

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Address:

Phone:

Wisconsin homeowners are paying an unfair amount of taxes. Manufacturing and tourism industries should pay more of their fair share of the tax burden.

Thank you.

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Wednesday, May 26th, 1999, 1:18 pm

From: Rob Eddy (rob.eddy@newelloffice.com)

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Address:

Phone:

It is truly a shame that Wisconsin's lawmakers continue to rape their constituents and perpetuate the third highest tax burden in the nation. I've lived most of my life in Wisconsin and feel that Wisconsin is a great place to live, but recently I had cause to spend several years in another state which has no state income tax. The city in which I lived which is comparable in size and demographic to Madison. This other state has a higher sales tax (8.25%), but overall had a 50 to 75% lower property tax rate and a 20% lower overall cost of living. My property taxes in this state were less than 1/4th of the taxes I now pay in Madison.

I would agree that, in Wisconsin, some of our hard-earned tax dollars go to providing superior schools, parks and other amenities - but in my estimation, the cost to taxpayers is grossly disproportionate to the benefit.

The fact that the governor and his cronies continue to treat Wisconsin's tax coffers as a perk for businesses and an open check for lavish entertaining and pet projects digests me.

I'm surprised that there hasn't been a public outcry over this unreasonable tax burden, but I suspect that many state residents have never had the opportunity to live elsewhere and thus don't truly appreciate the degree to which they are being taken advantage of by their state lawmakers.

As much as I like living in Wisconsin, at my earliest opportunity, I will be planning to move to a state with a lower tax burden and cost of living.

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Wednesday, May 26th, 1999, 12:35 pm

From: Don Janisch (donj@boumatic.com)

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Address: 2718 Burritt Rd. Stoughton

Phone: 873-3339

Seeing Spencer Black on the news a couple of days ago made me wonder why the opposing view never seems to make the news. He was talking about corporations not paying enough taxes. My view is that corporations and businesses don't pay taxes, only individuals pay taxes. Any tax on business is treated like any other cost of doing business and is included in the price of the product. Therefore if tax on business increases, the cost of a product also increases. If the price of a product increases, the sales tax we pay on the product also is greater. So any time any politician talks about sticking it to corporations, what they are really saying is stick it to the consumer. As far as what to do about personal taxes, I believe taxes would be much more fair if a flat tax was implemented on both the state and federal level. Despite what the opponents to flat taxes would say, that it is unfair to the poor, what could be more fair for the poor than a family of four with an income of 30,000 paying no tax. (check the Dick Arme plan) All deductions for "special behaviors" should be eliminated. All income should be taxed at the same rate with the only deduction being for the number of dependents supported by that income. A flat tax would greatly reduce the cost of collecting taxes. Less government employees would be required because there would not be nearly as much paper work required. Cuts in government spending should start at the top and work there way down, starting with cuts to the expense accounts of our government officials.

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Wednesday, May 26th, 1999, 4:39 pm

From: Guest

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Address:

Phone:

Stop CORPORATE WELFARE in Wisconsin. Taxes for corporations and the wealthy have been going down but up for the average taxpayer. Ease the burden on those in the middle and lower income brackets by increasing taxes on the wealthy and corporations. Tommy Thompson and the Republicans are to blame for bleeding the folks in the lower and middle income levels.

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Wednesday, May 26th, 1999, 3:53 pm

From: Robert Vine (vine1@tds.net)

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Address: New Glarus, Wi.

Phone:

Higher Taxes have forced Both Parents Out of the HOME and Into the Work-Force leaving the responsibility of RAISING Our Children in the Hands of the Schools and the Law. The Schools, (and Doctors), have resorted to handing out Prozak to subdue Our Children & the Law has decreed that Our Ten Year Old Children be tried and Punished as Adults. With what is going on in Our Country of late, I think we can all agree that this isn't Working Out and We NEED to Take Back the Responsibility of Raising Our Own Children. And the only realistic way this can happen is with the Support of Our Government. Why not Raise Taxes on Luxury Items and do away with INCOME Taxes Completely! Then when I Bust-My-Butt putting in Overtime every week, Me and My Family can Reap the Rewards as intended. More GOD, less Man.

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Tuesday, May 25th, 1999, 11:03 pm

From: Keithh Symon (krsymon@facstaff.wisc.edu)

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Address: Spring Green, WI 53588

Phone:

I believe we should be willing to pay to keep Wisconsin one of the best places to live in the country

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Be Your Own Lobbyist

Time: Tuesday, May 25th, 1999, 7:51 pm

From: Catherine O'Meara (pdhemo@jefnet.com)

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Address: N5550 CTY HWY Q Jefferson, WI 53549
Phone:

The services the state offers are not commensurate with the taxes I pay. Middle income taxpayers are hit harder than the wealthy, and corporate taxes should be much higher and intelligently designed. Wisconsin property taxes are WAY too high; which is why our wise, elderly (read: wealthy) citizens move to states like AL, FL, GA, etc., where the taxes we pay for through property taxes are paid for through sales taxes, etc. I wonder why GA has lower property taxes, excellent schools, and the lottery pays for college and grad. level ed. for those maintaining a B average? Do our "lawmakers" think we're not privy to this information? Do they think we don't care? Are they just incredibly inept? (Is Mike Ellis still in the Senate? He was my history/civics teacher in high school, and never struck me as stupid...then.) Have they sold out to too many special interests? Put simply, our taxes are way too high. Stop blaming us, education, Milwaukee, whatever, and actively, positively, lower them.

Getifffoiardost

isOHINK

CREATIVELY. It would be nice to hear from some of you once in a while, too!

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Wisconsin Technical College System Board
Edward Chin, State Director

Testimony Before the Joint Committee on Finance
Regarding the 1999-01 Wisconsin State Budget

March 11, 1999

Edward Chin, State Director

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee to highlight and comment upon those items in the budget bill that impact the Technical College System. We appreciate the interest and support the Committee has extended to the System over the years. We understand the difficult task in putting this budget together. The state's commitment to fund two-thirds of K-12 education, the fiscal challenges posed by corrections and health care, and the priority placed on tax relief have clearly meant that less discretionary funding is available in the state budget.

Student Financial Assistance

We are, therefore, pleased to see that the Governor recognizes the importance of our System in meeting the state's workforce needs by his proposal to create a \$3.3 million Technical College Study Grant program. As I understand the proposal, high school graduates with solid academic records as measured by their GPAs would receive a grant from the state if they enroll full-time in a technical college within one year of graduation from high school. Attracting more high school graduates to technical college is one of the strategic goals set by the State Board and strongly supported by the 16 technical college districts through their school-to-work and tech prep efforts. This new program's merit based student assistance will also convey the message that Technical College programs are of a high academic rigor.

Correspondingly, the System appreciates the Governor's proposal to provide a 6% annual increase in funding for Wisconsin Higher Education Grants for technical college students. Increasing this need-based financial aid program will help maintain student access.

We do have a concern regarding the tuition remission program recently established by the state for the surviving children and spouses of fire fighters, law enforcement officers, and correctional officers killed in the line of duty. The sum certain, annual appropriation of \$15,000 GPR was sufficient in the first year of the program (1996-97), but remissions have exceeded the appropriation since then (by \$1,200 in 1997-98 and by an estimated \$3,800 in 1998-99). Our preferred way to address this issue would be to change the appropriation to a sum sufficient because, by state law, a full remission of tuition must be granted by a technical college to an eligible individual. At a minimum though, we would ask that the Committee consider increasing the appropriation to address the shortfall and to accommodate any potential growth. (It should be noted that the Governor's budget would increase the UW System's annual appropriation for this purpose from \$15,000 GPR to \$30,000 GPR.)

Categorical Aid Programs

We further appreciate the Governor's proposal to provide \$500,000 GPR during the biennium to support the development of Waukesha County Technical College's printing program. As highlighted in the Governor's state-of-state address, this unique 2+2+2 program will enable students to participate in a two-year combination youth apprenticeship/tech prep printing program in high school, move on to Waukesha's printing and publishing associate degree program and then complete a baccalaureate degree from UW-Stout. A student would never have to leave the Waukesha area to complete this program. The program is a model collaborative effort which the System hopes to see replicated in other districts with other programs.

The Governor also recommends two items under the Department of Commerce's budget for the Wisconsin Development Fund that will have a positive impact on the System. First, the budget authorizes \$1,000,000 in each year of the biennium for the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP) which provides technical assistance and helps small and medium sized businesses assess their needs and implement the latest technologies and also provides customized training for employees of smaller companies supplying original equipment manufacturers. The technical colleges are active participants in the WMEP. Second, the budget provides \$500,000 in each year of the biennium to support a consortium in the Racine-Kenosha area of business, governmental and education entities (including Gateway Technical College) to provide training in manufacturing technology for secondary and post-secondary students, displaced workers and local manufacturing workers.

Need for Additional State Support

General State Aid

While the budget proposal contains the positive items noted above, we are disappointed that the budget includes no increase in general state aids for the System. General aid is the System's largest source of state assistance totaling \$113.5 million GPR in the current fiscal year (1998-99). During the last two biennia, general aid has increased by a grand total of 3% (no increase in the 1995-97 biennium and 1.5% annual increases in the 1997-99 biennium).

Another two years of frozen general aids would place additional pressure on the property tax. Quite frankly, during the last four years, technical college districts have had to rely upon the property tax to fund a disproportionate share of their budgetary requirements.

We must also remind the Committee that the state's participation in funding the Technical College System has slipped to about 23% this year. Ten years ago

the state's share was 30% and twenty years ago it was 35%. A 0% increase for the next two years would bring the state share to nearly 20%.

The State Board originally requested the Governor to consider general aid increases of 4.4% in the first year and 4.8% in the second year at a total cost of \$15.7 million GPR (\$5 million increase beginning in 1999-00 followed by an additional \$5.7 million in 2000-01). This proposal seeks to halt the decline in state support, allow at a minimum the same level of programming and services to continue in the next biennium, and assist the System in meeting the workforce training needs of the districts and the state. We urge the Committee to consider this proposal, which is the consensus of the State Board, District Boards Association, District Presidents Association, Technical College Student Governments Association, WEAC, WFT and WVA.

Targeted Assistance

In addition, the Technical College System hopes that the Committee will consider resources to support several other targeted funding proposals requested by the State Board, but not included in AB 133. Specifically, the Board requested:

- \$300,000 GPR annually to expand access to assistive technology by disabled students and workers.
- \$100,000 GPR annually to facilitate re-entry into the labor force for displaced homemakers.
- \$400,000 GPR annually to expand career opportunities in non-traditional occupations for both women and men.

These items involve special services to target populations which is a very important part of the System's statutory mission. We believe that if the state wants to increase the pool of skilled workers available to employers, it must expand the employment possibilities of those individuals who need supportive services in order to benefit from education and training.

Technology

With regard to technology, the Board requested \$500,000 GPR annually to support WTCS district projects that integrate the use of new instructional technology into the technical college curriculum. These funds would build upon the successes of the districts' teaching innovation centers which are partially supported by state GPR monies. These centers assist faculty in learning how to use new and emerging technologies effectively in the design and delivery of instruction. The additional funds would allow technical college instructors to move from the mastery of technology to the actual integration and use of technology in curriculum design, content and delivery.

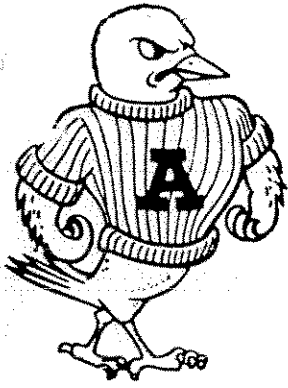
The System benefited by the creation of the TEACH telecommunications access program in the last budget. Each WTCS district received one interactive video link and the monthly line charge for that link is partially subsidized by the TEACH Board. These additional video links will allow the colleges to continue to play an important role in distance education not only within the System, but also with K-12 school districts and other postsecondary institutions. In the budget, the Governor recommends a series of changes related to the access program including a proposal to merge the funds for the WTCS line subsidies with the funds for private colleges and public libraries. The amount of funding available in this appropriation would be increased by nearly 80% in the first year. However, it appears that none of that increase would be available for WTCS districts since each district is limited to only one subsidized video link through TEACH even though 15 of the 16 districts have more than one campus location. We would ask that as the Committee reviews this item, you consider expanding the number of WTCS campus sites eligible for a TEACH subsidy, and possibly include state educational agencies as eligible entities.

School to Work

The budget bill recommends the creation of a nine-member Work-Based Learning Board attached to the Department of Workforce Development to oversee various school-to-work programs. The System would have two representatives on the Board—the President of the Technical College System Board and the State Director. We believe that a focused examination of school-to-work programs is appropriate especially at a time when the state's five-year federal grant under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act is expiring. We also believe that it is important that the state ensure adequate financial support for the breadth of School to Work activities, including work-based learning programs like youth apprenticeship and school-based learning programs such as tech-prep. The budget would transfer the authority to administer \$2.1 million in federal tech-prep funds to the new Work-Based Learning Board. Currently, those funds are jointly administered by the WTCS Board and DPI and are used primarily to support school-based activities (such as course articulation between high schools and technical colleges, integrated and applied academics curriculum development, advanced standing agreements, staff development and career exploration activities) to ensure a more seamless transition for students between high school and technical college. As a matter of note, the Technical Colleges receive a preponderance of their enrollments out of high school as a result of school based learning activities. At this time, it cannot be determined how the proposed Work-Based Learning Board might want to direct the federal tech-prep funds. A preliminary discussion among the key agencies to be involved in the Work Based Learning Board indicates a willingness to consider a variety of program and funding options to reach a consensus. In the effort to support work-based programs like youth apprenticeship, school-based learning efforts should not be diminished. Both are critically important.

Finally, we have a concern regarding a provision under the Governor's Work-Based Learning Board which would require the WTCS Board to expend up to \$125,000 annually from federal funds received under the Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act to develop curricula for youth apprenticeship programs. As drafted, this provision would require that this expenditure would be made from appropriation 20.292(1)(m) Federal aid, state operations. According to the Department of Administration, this was a drafting error and the reference should have been made to appropriation 20.292(1)(n) Federal aid, local assistance. The curriculum to be developed would be for high school students and so is more appropriately assigned to this appropriation.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to present testimony. I again express my hope that the Technical Colleges will be high on the Legislature's priority list.



UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ANTIGO

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

120 S. DORR STREET - ANTIGO, WI 54409
715-627-4355

3/21/99

To Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

As one of two library media specialists serving our 500 square mile district's eleven elementary school library media centers, I am very concerned about the impact of the proposed budget on the operation of our many, tiny libraries in a district with decreasing enrollment.

This year I was thrilled to learn that my students and teachers could have access to magazine and newspaper data bases through Badgerlink. I was familiar with "Primary Search" which works so well for our K-6 schools, but could not afford it due to a cost of about \$600. per school. This year we can access it over the internet via Badgerlink. The value of teaching children how to use Badgerlinks "Primary Search" compared to Childrens Magazine Guide (a print index) is that with "Primary Search", the student types in their subject and immediately receives a "hit list" of all the articles about the topic published in the last 5 or more years in magazines that are at their age/interest level. Some are full-text, others they can find in their library. Compare that to the frustration of looking up their subject in several yearly or monthly compilations of the print-version and dealing with spelling and cross references. I usually get told, "my subject's not in here" after the child looks in the first index. We only subscribe to 15 magazines per school. "Primary Search" indexes over 100 appropriate age-level magazines. Indexes of magazines and newspapers are so much more accessible and up-to-date on computer, I will hate having to return to reliance on print indexes. Teachers also have access to many additional resources not available in our tiny libraries through Badgerlink. Again, with our limited funds and many small schools, we cannot possibly afford to subscribe to any of the individual data bases Badgerlink offers. What a tremendous opportunity Badgerlink has opened for districts such as ours!

Another issue I am very concerned about is the cap on the Wisconsin Common School Library Fund. In our district, this fund is used for all the books purchased for the district library media centers. The amount of money received this year was down \$14,000.00 from two years ago. That is a tremendous amount of books our children did not have access to. Meanwhile book prices keep rising. In our elementary schools we have a number of reading motivation programs that excite and interest our children in reading. Our libraries may be small, but they are very busy places. I love going to the schools and seeing pairs of older and younger students huddled in corners of the library, the hallways, everywhere - reading to each other, or taking Accelerated Reader tests - or talking

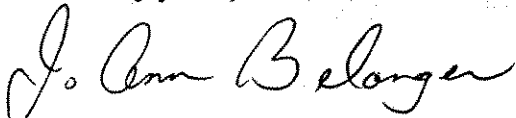
excitedly to a teacher or the library clerk, or me about a book just read. The TEACH funds are certainly necessary as they allow us to obtain the equipment needed to access wonderful materials such as Badgerlink, but if children can't read, they won't be able to efficiently use a computer as that almost always involves a lot of reading. It doesn't seem right that TEACH should be funded at the expense of books.

Another concern I have is the no increase budget for the 4 state contracts and the systems. Our system, WVLS, will take a cut. No increase seems to often result in a cut. Interlibrary loan is very important to our school district. Again, with limited funds, small schools can't afford to purchase lots of resources. Yet our clientele has the same needs for information as people in larger schools and cities. At least twice a week I make trips to our public library to pick up interlibrary loan bags containing information requested by our students or teachers. I would hate to see this practice discontinued due to lack of funds. For the past twelve years, the Childrens Cooperative Book Center in Madison (one of the 4 state contracts) has brought a "Book Fest" to Rhinelander which features the best children's books published in the previous year. I take my entire staff and several teachers to that meeting and use this as the basis for our book ordering. It is so nice to have the opportunity to hear Ginny Moore Kruse (probably one of the most knowledgeable people in the U.S. on children's literature) speak about the books and then having the opportunity to look at the books ourselves is certainly the very best way to make decisions of what is best to buy with our limited funds. I would hate to see opportunities like that lost due to lack of funds.

Ben Franklin established the concept of libraries as the great equalizers in our society. Libraries are a source of free information for all people, whether rich or poor or whether from metropolitan or rural areas. Please help see to it that this great tradition can continue and be enhanced by not pulling the plug on Badgerlink, by taking the cap off of the Wisconsin Common School Library Fund, and by increasing funds for the library systems and the four state contracts.

Thank you.

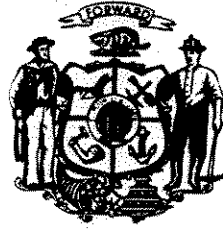
Sincerely yours,



JoAnn Belanger
Elementary Library Media Coordinator
Antigo Unified School District

STATE OF WISCONSIN
TEACH Wisconsin
101 East Wilson Street, Madison, Wisconsin

TOMMY G. THOMPSON
GOVERNOR
Doris J. Hanson
Executive Director



TEACH Wisconsin
Post Office Box 8761
Madison, WI 53708-8761

Voice (608) 261-7437
Fax (608) 261-7420
TTY (608) 266-1213

Web Site: www.teachwi.state.wi.us

**Testimony before the Joint Committee on Finance
Presented by Ray Allen, Chair
TEACH Wisconsin Board
1999-2001 Biennial Budget
March 24, 1999**

Good afternoon Chairman Burke, Chairman Gard, and members of the Committee. I am very pleased to be here today, and on behalf of the TEACH Wisconsin Board, I appreciate the opportunity to share with you our thoughts about Governor Thompson's budget initiatives for TEACH.

The Board is grateful to Governor Thompson for his vision of educational technology excellence for all Wisconsin teachers and students as we stand at the doorstep of the 21st century. We also appreciate the strong, bipartisan support TEACH has enjoyed in the Legislature, and we look forward to continuing our positive relationship with all of you. It is your constituents – the teachers and students you represent – who will benefit most from our continued investments in infrastructure, Internet access, distance education, staff development, and local technology needs for hardware and software.

This has been an exciting, productive, and challenging year for TEACH. The Board is proud of our accomplishments, but a lot of work remains to be done. The Board strongly supports the Governor's initiatives, both in terms of additional dollars and in statutory language changes that will allow us to better respond to the needs of the education and library communities.

For example, the telecommunications access program which subsidizes Internet access and distance education costs for schools and libraries is extremely successful – so successful, in fact, that TEACH has a substantial list of pending applications for services. The infusion of additional dollars will help TEACH meet the demand. Internet access is no longer a luxury for schools – it is a necessity. And, as you all know, distance education bridges the gap for schools who simply cannot afford to provide students with the classes they need to prepare for either post-secondary education or to enter into a high-tech workplace.

We also believe the statutory language changes the Governor has proposed for the access program will allow for greater cost effectiveness, a little more program flexibility, and most importantly, will give TEACH the ability to reach more schools and libraries.

Also, it is crucial, given performance-based budgeting requirements for TEACH, that we have the authority to fully administer the access program. The proposed budget language places the administrative functions of the program where it belongs – with TEACH rather than the Public Service Commission. Although the PSC will continue to manage the Universal Service Fund, including the telecommunications assessment for the access program, TEACH must be allowed to fully implement and administer the programs for which we will be held accountable.

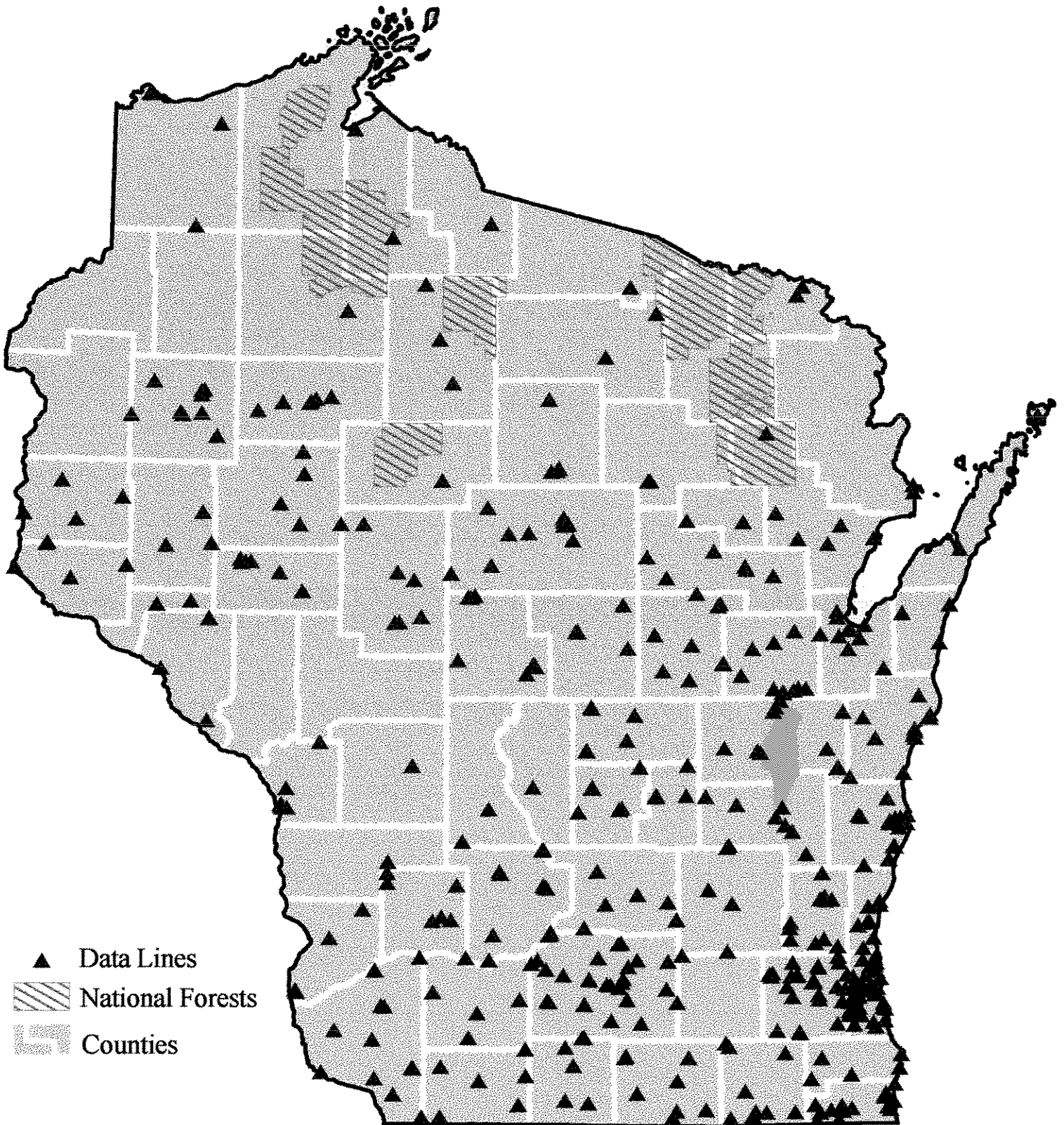
The proposed language change for the wiring loan program is a technical adjustment that will help out schools. Under current law, schools must report the entire amount of their wiring loan for debt reporting

purposes, even though half of the loan is forgiven by TEACH. By more accurately portraying the assistance as 50% loan and 50% grant, schools will only have to report their true debt load.

Finally, the TEACH Board is very excited about the proposed pilot project to bring foreign language via distance education to fifth and sixth graders. We all know that exposing kids to foreign language at a younger age, whether it is Spanish, German, or Japanese, will benefit all of us in the long run as we prepare our students for the 21st century work environment. Most school districts, however, simply cannot afford to provide the courses on their own. Yet again, distance education can help schools pool their resources to provide what will soon be an essential component to their students' education.

I respectfully request on behalf of the TEACH Board that you join us in supporting these improvements that will enable TEACH to meet the challenges we face in the next biennium and will improve our services to schools and libraries, and most importantly to our students. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today, and I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have following Executive Director Hanson's statement.

TEACH Education Telecommunication Access Services



TEACH Education Telecommunication Access Services

