



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Jan. 24th, 2018

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TECHNOLOGY, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION Senate Bill 680

Thank you, Chairman Stroebel and committee members for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 680. The legislation before you today would repeal a provision in 2015 Wisconsin Act 60, commonly known as the Bucks Arena legislation. The provision would transfer ownership of the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts from Milwaukee County to the Wisconsin Center District.

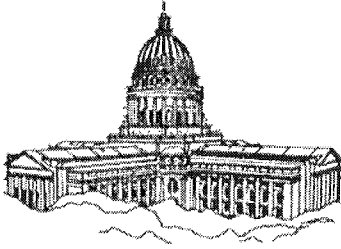
This transfer has yet to take place. Since the adoption of 2015 Wisconsin Act 60 Milwaukee County, the Wisconsin Center District, and the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts are all in agreement, the Center should remain owned and operated by Milwaukee County.

The Marcus Center serves as a gathering place for those looking to enjoy culturally diverse experiences from a wide range of performing arts. The Center is currently attempting to wean itself from government subsidy for operations and capital expenses. However, the uncertainty of future ownership is hindering the Marcus Center's goal of self-sustainability.

SB 680 would repeal this requirement and enable the Center to continue working toward financial independence. The Marcus Center has an agreement with Milwaukee County that includes a ten-year operations and capital agreement and a long-term lease agreement. Passage of SB 680 ensures the longevity of the agreements and the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts.

Thank you committee members for holding a hearing on SB 680.

I hope we can count on your support.



LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

**Testimony of State Senator Lena C. Taylor
Senate Committee on Government Operations,
Technology and Consumer Protection
Senate Bill 680
January 24, 2018**

Chairman Stroebel, members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on Senate Bill 680. This bill would repeal the provision requiring the transfer of the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts from Milwaukee County to the Wisconsin Center District.

The Marcus Center has been an asset to Milwaukee County and the state. First opened in 1969, the Center has provided decades-long opportunities for the community to be engaged in the arts. Currently, the Center hosts six resident companies including the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Ballet, Florentine Opera, First Stage Children's Theater, and the Hansberry-Sands Theater. In addition to these resources, the Marcus Center has become an essential community partner in the Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration. The King Day celebration provides a no-cost option for community members to appreciate multicultural backgrounds and inclusion.

These art and education resources foster our nation's creativity and positively contribute to our state's tourism and overall resident satisfaction. It is no secret Wisconsin has a youth retention problem. Youth today have higher levels of educational attainment, meaning the continued net loss of young people will have long-term negative impacts on our state's economy. During the 2014 Governor's Conference on Economic Development, UW-Madison Professor Morris Davis shared that Wisconsin lost, on average, 14,000 college graduates per year between 2008 and 2012. According to UW-Extension, Wisconsin has the least educated workforce in the region, creating a skills mismatch for between Wisconsinites and the jobs of tomorrow.

Supporting the arts will help our efforts to retain youth, draw in businesses, and grow our tourism sector. This bill will help address important issues in our state's economy by reducing uncertainty for the Marcus Center, its potential business partners, and area residents. Chairman Stroebel, members of the Committee, I ask for your support for Senate Bill 680.

Thank you for your time.

Senator Lena C. Taylor
4th Senate District