

Chair Harsdorf, committee members, my name is Dylan Jambrek and I'm the Government Relations Director for United Council of UW Students, the nonpartisan statewide student association representing the students of the UW System.

It would be an understatement that the UW Board of Regents has come under special scrutiny in the last few months. The discovery of significant end-of-year cash balances brought the UW's state allocation from an increase of 181 million dollars to a significant reduction, as well as an unprecedented two-year tuition freeze for resident undergraduates.

Many in this building questioned the Board of Regents' ability to govern the UW System. While I've worked with and respect many of them, if you look at the demographics of the Regents, you'll find it isn't terribly representative of the people of this state - it's filled predominantly with wealthy men with a history of large contributions to one party or the other. I've nothing wrong with wealthy folks serving on boards in principle, but the price of tuition may be something a little out of grasp with those who need not worry about its burden.

This highlights the importance of the two student regent positions in advocating for and voting to support affordability for Wisconsinites to attend college, improve their skills, and find good jobs.

The students I work with are usually those most involved on campus, those involved in prominent student organizations and those elected to student government. In talking with a lot of them, they have, for years, felt disconnected with both the process of selecting their representatives, as well as often with the representatives themselves.

Were this bill to pass, I would still fully expect that a Republican Governor would have plenty of qualified conservative students to pick from and vice-versa. What's perhaps not known about our student government leaders is that they come from across the political spectrum. Just last year, despite my alma mater UW-Eau Claire being in a blue town, had a Student Body President who interned in the Speaker's office. I think you'd find that our student leaders run the gamut on political views, but moreover are pretty savvy. In years with a Republican Governor, I'd think you'd find even student governments controlled by those on the left would be nominating those on the right in hopes of getting their campus to fill the Regent spot.

Anecdotally, when I was Student Body President at UW-Eau Claire, my term was during the transition from Gov. Doyle to Gov. Walker. In the first half of my term, I would have likely nominated myself, but in the second half of my term, I would have likely nominated my Academic Affairs Director, Mark Morgan, who now works in Senator Moulton's office.

This isn't all to undercut newly appointed Chad Landes before he gets started. It sounds like Chad's got a good head on his shoulders, and I wish him well. I'm talking about a process that ensures going forward we find good, thoughtful, involved, and critical students to be our Student Regents. It's important that our Student Regents reflect our students themselves and not become part of a groupthink that sometimes grips our Board of Regents in its decision making.

SB 157 is a one-word change in statute that would empower our students in helping to govern the University of Wisconsin in a responsible and affordable way, and I encourage you to take action on the bill.

Thank you, and I'd be happy to take any questions.