



LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

Testimony of State Senator Lena C. Taylor

In support of Senate Bill 396

Creating a college application week

Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Thank you Senator Hasdorf and members of the committee for allowing me to present this testimony today.

Senate Bill 396 would create a one week period during which every Wisconsin high school junior or senior may apply to any UW System or technical school for free.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2014, only 68.4% of high school graduates were enrolled in college – the lowest figure in a decade. This indicates an alarming problem facing both higher education and secondary education today – that the idea that college is attainable is shrinking.

Senate Bill 396 puts forth a modest proposal aimed at combatting this problem by giving Wisconsin's youth the opportunity to apply to their own state's public institutions of higher education free of charge for one week each year. The least the legislature can do is extend this small hope to all of its constituents. The sticker price of college – now at \$10,415 per year for in-state residents at UW-Madison – is alarming enough in its own right. On top of this, young Wisconsin applicants and their families are being asked to pay significant fees simply to apply – fees that will reach \$50 per applicant by the next school year and will more than likely continue to rise after that.

A higher education prepares today's students – prepares *Wisconsin's* students – for the jobs of the future and endows them with the training they need to solve the problems that will face our great state. With such important investments on the line, we should be doing everything in our power to encourage our students to seek such an education.

I believe sticker shock is a significant barrier to applying for college. This bill simply opens the door for students who might not otherwise have thought a college degree was within their grasp. Let's help give our students the opportunity, assistance, and hope that they deserve.

Thank you.

