

Alberta Darling
Wisconsin State Senator
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON
UNIVERSITIES AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES**

Senate Bill 703
February 17, 2016

Thank you Chairwoman Harsdorf and committee members for holding a public hearing today on Senate Bill 703. The legislation before you modifies the teacher loan program to provide loan forgiveness to certain teachers employed in school districts in rural counties.

Like many other states, Wisconsin is dealing with a teacher shortage. Currently, college graduates are entering the teaching profession at a smaller rate than before. Even more alarming is the need for teachers in rural communities. Finding quality teachers in rural areas is becoming more and more challenging. It is my hope that SB 703 will incentivize teachers to look at job openings in rural communities throughout Wisconsin.

Under current law, a student eligible for a loan from the Higher Educational Aids Board may be awarded up to \$10,000 annually for not more than 3 years, with a maximum of \$30,000 per student. HEAB is then required to forgive 25% of the loan each school year the loan recipient is employed in the city of Milwaukee and receives a teacher rating of proficient or distinguished.

SB 703 modifies the teacher loan program to provide loan forgiveness to not only teachers employed in the city of Milwaukee but also to school teachers teaching in rural counties. This would be a huge benefit to teachers who are dealing with the burden of their student loans.

It is our hope the extra incentive for college graduates in education will help fill the teacher shortage we are seeing in many rural counties.

I want to thank Representative Quinn for his work on this bill and the members of the Rural Wisconsin Initiative. Their work has been very helpful addressing the needs of rural Wisconsin.

Thank you again committee members and I hope to have your support for SB 703.



Romaine Quinn

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 75th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

SB 703

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these important bills today.

The Rural Wisconsin Initiative is the product of many conversations about how to improve opportunities for our rural residents, and how to attract new residents to areas that are quickly aging. While development projects and infrastructure in the southeast corner of the state often take the headlines in news reports, our rural areas sometimes see their issues moved to the back burner.

No one wants a handout; rather, our goal is to give our students, parents, and workers the same opportunities to grow, develop, and excel that their more urban counterparts can sometimes take for granted. Rural Wisconsin is quickly aging, and will continue to lose population over the coming decades. Addressing this problem now is vital to maintaining the vibrancy of our state.

The teacher loan forgiveness program has been offered to education students in urban Milwaukee and administered through the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB), provided the student meets certain criteria, including enrollment in a program of study leading to a teacher's license in a teacher shortage field. Under the program, HEAB may award, to an eligible student, a loan of up to \$10,000 annually for up to three years. HEAB must forgive 25 percent of the loan for each school year that the loan recipient 1) is employed in the city of Milwaukee as a full-time elementary or secondary school teacher in a high-demand, teacher shortage field; and 2) receives a teacher rating of proficient or distinguished.

As we have said, the Rural Wisconsin Initiative is about equality of opportunity. Through discussions with administrators at my district schools, my local CESA, and the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, I know that rural schools face many of the same challenges in attracting excellent teachers that these urban Milwaukee schools face. Declining enrollment as

families relocate to cities means that rural school budgets are tight, and schools often face a limited pool of candidates that have often been reviewed previously.

Meanwhile, the loan forgiveness program has been underutilized. That leaves money available to expand this program to rural education students who want to stay near home, but may not be able to afford to do so while paying off student loans.

Four to five years is generally seen as the turning point when teachers decide whether to stay in the profession or change schools or even careers. In a demanding job, if we can reduce the stress new teachers in rural areas face in their first five years, we significantly increase the likelihood that they will stay with their school, stay in their local community, and perhaps begin to consider raising a family. We would do this without reducing support for students currently availing themselves of the program and with only a small investment in upgrading the program's database. Simply, it will give rural students and school districts the same opportunity to succeed as Milwaukee schools.

We can't allow rural schools to slip behind urban or suburban schools, and we know that a good education starts with a great teacher. Allowing equal access to this loan forgiveness program will ensure that all students in our state have the opportunity to learn from the talented teachers we are producing.

<u>Code</u>	<u>District Name</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Sq./Mile</u>	<u>FY 14 FRL %</u>
14	ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP AREA	1,698	3.52	72.60%
63	ALBANY	439	6.47	34.90%
84	ALMA	221	1.59	40.70%
91	ALMA CENTER	580	4.32	61.20%
105	ALMOND-BANCROFT	464	4.27	45.30%
140	ANTIGO	2,534	4.68	53.40%
154	ARCADIA	1,177	5.83	52.80%
161	ARGYLE	337	4.05	35.60%
170	ASHLAND	2,228	5.45	58.80%
196	ATHENS	452	3.54	37.60%
203	AUBURNDALE	851	5.66	41.80%
217	AUGUSTA	655	4.06	49.20%
245	BANGOR	575	6.25	29.70%
287	BARNEVELD	440	6.51	18.00%
308	BARRON AREA	1,449	8.02	56.20%
315	BAYFIELD	437	2.78	64.50%
4263	BEECHER-DUNBAR-PEMBINE	262	1.18	62.60%
364	BELMONT COMMUNITY	364	3.57	37.10%
427	BENTON	242	7.49	38.00%
434	BERLIN AREA	1,627	7.87	48.00%
6013	BIG FOOT UHS	530	7	36.40%
441	BIRCHWOOD	253	1.3	83.00%
2240	BLACK HAWK	393	2.93	40.50%
476	BLACK RIVER FALLS	1,829	3.96	46.80%
485	BLAIR-TAYLOR	627	3.52	41.90%
497	BLOOMER	1,223	7.34	37.10%
602	BONDUEL	880	5.79	51.70%
609	BOSCOBEL AREA	836	4.76	59.30%
623	BOWLER	435	3.28	50.60%
637	BOYCEVILLE COMMUNITY	755	4.73	53.00%
657	BRIGHTON #1	121	3.59	37.20%
735	BRUCE	560	2.07	57.90%
840	BUTTERNUT	192	0.83	67.70%
870	CADOTT COMMUNITY	876	5.77	39.60%
882	CAMBRIA-FRIESLAND	394	4.73	50.30%
910	CAMPBELLSPORT	1,404	7.86	27.80%
980	CASHTON	569	4.82	37.80%
994	CASSVILLE	215	2.15	45.60%
5054	CENTRAL/WESTOSHA UHS	1,218	8.69	22.50%
1071	CHEQUAMEGON	761	1.03	50.90%
1080	CHETEK	1,018	3.55	44.90%
1085	CHILTON	1,123	9.42	32.90%
1120	CLAYTON	377	6.56	54.60%
1127	CLEAR LAKE	626	5.81	40.30%
1134	CLINTON COMMUNITY	1,092	9.8	36.40%

Organized
Alphabetically
Eligible Districts

1141 CLINTONVILLE	1,392	8.57	50.80%
1155 COCHRANE-FOUNTAIN CITY	686	3.94	37.20%
1162 COLBY	983	5.96	47.10%
1169 COLEMAN	718	3.75	42.30%
1176 COLFAX	844	4.58	44.80%
1183 COLUMBUS	1,229	9.19	29.80%
1204 CORNELL	432	4.28	57.90%
1218 CRANDON	924	1.74	48.50%
1232 CRIVITZ	722	2.53	53.50%
1246 CUBA CITY	632	8.02	32.80%
1260 CUMBERLAND	938	5	49.10%
1295 DARLINGTON COMMUNITY	791	4.93	34.50%
1421 DESOTO AREA	599	3.1	43.20%
2744 DODGELAND	841	9.96	40.50%
1428 DODGEVILLE	1,292	6.75	36.50%
1491 DRUMMOND	409	0.61	51.80%
1499 DURAND	978	3.33	34.30%
1561 EDGAR	663	8.14	29.90%
1582 ELCHO	375	1.16	62.10%
1600 ELEVA-STRUM	616	4.93	41.20%
1631 ELKHART LAKE-GLENBEULAH	520	8.79	0.00%
1659 ELLSWORTH COMMUNITY	1,747	7.59	27.10%
1666 ELMWOOD	330	3.48	41.20%
1687 ERIN	237	9.93	16.90%
1729 FALL CREEK	813	7.74	27.60%
1813 FENNIMORE COMMUNITY	758	5.12	50.00%
5757 FLAMBEAU	623	2.02	54.10%
1855 FLORENCE	482	0.97	43.40%
1939 FREDERIC	513	3.38	54.40%
2009 GALESVILLE-ETTRICK	1,428	7.58	26.80%
2114 GIBRALTAR AREA	575	4.13	25.60%
2128 GILLETT	604	5.45	49.50%
2135 GILMAN	410	1.22	57.30%
2142 GILMANTON	180	1.89	47.20%
2198 GLENWOOD CITY	760	6.61	39.90%
2212 GOODMAN-ARMSTRONG	116	0.73	56.90%
2226 GRANTON AREA	243	3.28	67.10%
2233 GRANTSBURG	858	3.23	48.40%
2310 GREEN LAKE	275	8.71	29.10%
2394 GREENWOOD	418	2.78	55.30%
2415 GRESHAM	297	5.3	71.00%
2436 HARTFORD UHS	1,555	8.62	22.50%
2478 HAYWARD COMMUNITY	1,814	2.96	60.70%
2523 HERMAN #22	68	1.91	33.80%
2527 HIGHLAND	301	4.17	31.20%
2534 HILBERT	460	6.88	23.90%
2541 HILLSBORO	502	3.57	56.20%

2618 HURLEY	636	1.32	48.70%
2625 HUSTISFORD	450	8.55	31.60%
2632 INDEPENDENCE	365	3.75	51.20%
2639 IOLA-SCANDINAVIA	713	5.34	40.10%
2646 IOWA-GRANT	746	4.57	44.50%
2660 ITHACA	337	3.82	43.00%
2737 JUDA	261	4.77	51.70%
2814 KEWAUNEE	967	7.5	30.50%
5960 KICKAPOO AREA	470	3.18	63.20%
1848 LAC DU FLAMBEAU #1	534	4.18	86.30%
2856 LADYSMITH-HAWKINS	873	4.56	56.10%
2863 LAFARGE	261	3.74	55.90%
2891 LAKE HOLCOMBE	338	1.85	55.60%
3647 LAKELAND UHS	702	0.94	43.70%
2912 LANCASTER COMMUNITY	922	6.46	37.20%
2940 LAONA	212	0.88	45.80%
2961 LENA	419	4.78	37.90%
3087 LINN J4	121	7.8	47.90%
3094 LINN J6	100	5.96	33.00%
3206 LOYAL	562	4.96	48.60%
3213 LUCK	484	4.41	46.30%
3276 MANAWA	755	6.84	38.00%
3297 MAPLE	1,328	2.98	46.20%
3304 MARATHON CITY	649	6.2	20.20%
3318 MARION	507	3.99	63.10%
3325 MARKESAN	848	4.43	39.60%
3360 MAUSTON	1,451	6.98	59.50%
3409 MEDFORD AREA	2,095	5.97	37.70%
3427 MELLEN	286	1.42	64.00%
3428 MELROSE-MINDORO	813	4.19	49.40%
3434 MENOMINEE INDIAN	916	2.49	79.10%
3484 MERCER	138	0.75	55.10%
3500 MERRILL AREA	2,867	5.02	40.80%
3633 MINERAL POINT	753	5.61	25.60%
3640 MINOCQUA J1	592	2.37	38.00%
3661 MISHICOT	833	8.18	22.20%
3668 MONDOVI	968	5.2	34.60%
3689 MONTELLO	731	4.12	49.90%
3696 MONTICELLO	385	6.07	38.40%
3787 MOSINEE	2,093	8.93	30.50%
3871 NECEDAH AREA	705	2.98	63.40%
3899 NEILLSVILLE	1,021	3.65	45.20%
3906 NEKOOSA	1,274	7.87	50.10%
3913 NEOSHO J3	207	6.6	31.40%
3920 NEW AUBURN	298	3.39	58.40%
3941 NEW HOLSTEIN	1,179	8.38	23.90%
3948 NEW LISBON	639	5.61	62.10%

3969 NIAGARA	390	5.47	58.20%
2016 NORTH CRAWFORD	463	3.11	65.90%
616 NORTH LAKELAND	147	0.55	50.30%
1526 NORTHLAND PINES	1,317	2.78	49.90%
3654 NORTHWOOD	394	0.94	57.60%
3990 NORWALK-ONTARIO-WILTON	713	4.74	58.60%
4011 NORWAY J7	81	6.75	19.80%
4025 OAKFIELD	507	8.13	16.40%
4186 OSSEO-FAIRCHILD	976	3.34	39.10%
4207 OWEN-WITHEE	526	3.32	47.90%
4228 PARDEEVILLE AREA	889	9.65	34.00%
4235 PARIS J1	171	4.62	35.70%
4151 PARKVIEW	899	7.23	38.90%
490 PECATONICA AREA	433	3.84	35.30%
4270 PEPIN AREA	244	2.64	29.50%
4330 PHELPS	147	1.36	51.00%
4347 PHILLIPS	821	1.38	44.50%
4368 PITTSVILLE	610	1.68	32.00%
4459 PLUM CITY	280	3.41	38.20%
4508 PORT EDWARDS	414	6.74	42.80%
4529 POTOSI	331	4.21	28.70%
4557 PRAIRIE FARM	345	3.9	52.80%
4571 PRENTICE	456	1.09	42.80%
4606 PRINCETON	404	4.53	37.60%
4634 RANDOLPH	521	8.55	47.60%
4760 REEDSVILLE	675	6	21.20%
4781 RHINELANDER	2,483	6.41	45.60%
4795 RIB LAKE	486	1.72	44.20%
4802 RICE LAKE AREA	2,341	9.67	44.10%
4851 RICHLAND	1,396	5.35	52.10%
4865 RIO COMMUNITY	494	6.52	37.70%
4904 RIVER RIDGE	502	2.29	44.20%
5523 RIVER VALLEY	1,371	4.63	36.50%
3850 RIVERDALE	717	3.62	54.10%
4956 ROSENDALE-BRANDON	969	7.63	28.70%
4963 ROSHOLT	567	3.67	33.00%
1673 ROYALL	663	5.62	48.60%
4998 RUBICON J6	97	6.99	34.00%
5019 SAINT CROIX FALLS	1,163	7.79	41.50%
5124 SENECA	298	2.5	66.40%
5130 SEVASTOPOL	554	4.72	41.90%
5306 SHELL LAKE	635	4.07	58.10%
5348 SHIOCTON	757	7.01	32.40%
5362 SHULLSBURG	383	3.97	48.80%
5376 SIREN	476	4.32	68.30%
5397 SOLON SPRINGS	289	1.82	46.00%
4522 SOUTH SHORE	186	0.64	44.60%

5457 SOUTHERN DOOR COUNTY	1,154	5.86	33.10%
2485 SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN	587	9.77	38.70%
5460 SPARTA AREA	2,784	9.83	52.10%
5474 SPOONER	1,368	2.62	55.00%
5586 SPRING VALLEY	716	6.37	47.20%
5593 STANLEY-BOYD AREA	1,004	5.52	52.80%
5614 STOCKBRIDGE	239	3.88	19.20%
5628 STRATFORD	934	8.05	26.80%
5670 SURING	428	1.36	50.00%
5726 THORP	562	3.54	54.40%
5733 THREE LAKES	529	1.74	41.40%
5740 TIGERTON	255	2.63	73.70%
5747 TOMAH AREA	3,122	6.67	43.20%
5754 TOMAHAWK	1,276	3	40.40%
126 TOMORROW RIVER	962	9.62	23.90%
4375 TRI-COUNTY AREA	648	2.96	64.20%
5810 TURTLE LAKE	476	4.21	45.00%
5852 UNION GROVE UHS	746	8.72	22.80%
238 UNITY	1,096	7.44	54.40%
5866 VALDERS AREA	995	8.55	22.70%
5985 VIROQUA AREA	1,145	5.97	47.10%
5992 WABENO AREA	416	1.27	55.80%
6027 WASHBURN	535	2.87	42.80%
6069 WASHINGTON	57	2.23	38.60%
6230 WAUSAUKEE	521	1.24	53.00%
6237 WAUTOMA AREA	1,442	8.15	61.90%
6251 WAUZEKA-STEUBEN	295	3.09	66.10%
6293 WEBSTER	690	1.41	76.80%
6321 WESTBY AREA	1,205	7.15	36.60%
6335 WESTFIELD	1,162	4.03	49.80%
6354 WESTON	313	3.14	51.40%
6384 WEYAUWEGA-FREMONT	904	5.81	40.60%
6440 WHITE LAKE	195	0.96	76.90%
6426 WHITEHALL	771	5.61	47.50%
6475 WILD ROSE	581	4.02	46.80%
6615 WINTER	321	0.49	51.10%
6678 WISCONSIN DELLS	1,770	9.48	45.30%
469 WISCONSIN HEIGHTS	787	7.53	30.60%
6692 WITTENBERG-BIRNAMWOOD	1,206	4.79	43.00%
6713 WONEWOC-UNION CENTER	370	3.89	64.30%
6720 WOODRUFF J1	443	4.15	49.70%