



State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Date: January 19, 2016

To: Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges

From: Senator Sheila Harsdorf

RE: Senate Bill 540 - Wisconsin Grants for Technical Colleges

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 540 (SB 540) which proposes to provide an additional \$1 million in matching funds over the biennia to the Wisconsin Grant for technical colleges.

The Wisconsin Grant provides need-based grants to resident undergraduate students enrolled at least half-time at a Wisconsin technical college. Eligible students may receive anywhere from \$500 to \$1,084 in awards. In the last biennia some 24,000 technical college students received an average of \$802 to assist with tuition costs. Given that the need exceeded available funding, eligible students not receiving aid were put on a waiting list. This additional funding will help aid additional students and reduce the wait list.

Following introduction of SB 540, stakeholders brought forth concerns regarding the matching funds requirement. Given these concerns, we have drafted a substitute amendment with a number of changes. These changes include: eliminating the matching fund requirement, providing an additional \$1 million in funding in this biennium, and increasing base funding for the technical college Wisconsin Grant by \$500,000.

The Wisconsin Grant is key in our effort to helping students seek a career in a technical field and this legislation will help additional students achieve their career goals and address our workforce needs.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 540. I urge your support of this legislation.