

What Happened To Student Loan Relief?

Written by Joint Finance Committee Democrats
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Americans have more than a trillion dollars in student loan debt. Wisconsinites are hurting and the most meaningful bill for college students on Thursday's Joint Finance Committee agenda deals with how to tax songs on a juke box.

MADISON - Less than a month before the expected final day of the 2015-17 Legislative Session, Republicans on the Joint Committee on Finance again punted on addressing the growing student loan debt crisis.

Since Republicans came into power, Wisconsin's public schools, universities and technical schools have lost more than \$2 billion in state funding, yet Republicans have repeatedly rejected a popular Democratic plan that would provide genuine relief to the one million Wisconsinites burdened with student loan debt. In response to public backlash, Republicans recently introduced watered-down legislation that targets only an extremely small number of people and fails to lower monthly payments for the average borrower by even a penny.



"Republicans cut \$250 million from our UW System without batting an eye," said Representative **Chris Taylor** (D-Madison). "But now, the so-called party of 'big, bold reforms' is getting heartburn over a last minute, feeble attempt to try to convince Wisconsin that they actually care about the cost of higher education. We know what their real priorities are – ramming through legislation to protect their own jobs and prevent political corruption investigations instead of putting our kids and our state first."

"Student debt is a huge factor affecting our statewide economy. Recent graduates riddled with debt do not buy homes, they do not buy cars, they do not go on vacation, they struggle to pay other bills, they don't plan for retirement and on and on. We could enact a plan that does not cost state taxpayers a dime today so that our people could refinance crippling student debt tomorrow," said Senator **Jon Erpenbach** (D-Middleton).

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“During the budget, the majority had no problem passing nearly every motion in a lock-step vote,” said Rep. **Gordon Hintz** (D-Oshkosh). “Republicans have watered down their student loan debt reform bills to the point where you have to squint to see them, yet still can’t manage to get enough consensus to get them on JFC’s agenda. That should speak volumes about their priorities. If Republicans were serious about addressing the student loan crisis they would be taking up our ‘Higher Ed, Lower Debt’ bill today.”

“Americans have more than a trillion dollars in student loan debt. Wisconsinites are hurting and the most meaningful bill for college students on today’s Joint Finance Committee agenda deals with how to tax songs on a juke box,” said Sen. **Lena Taylor** (D-Milwaukee).