



June 20, 2023

To: Chippewa Valley area legislators

From: Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

Re: Technical College System funding

The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce has served our community since 1915 as the advocate of business. We have 1,100 investor organizations who employ more than 45,000 individuals throughout the Eau Claire area. We work to represent the business community as a champion of a strong local and regional economy.

We are writing in reference to the amendment to Assembly Bill 2 that was added by the Assembly Ways and Means Committee late last week that would replace the local operational tax authority for the state's technical colleges with state aid.

We are concerned that such a drastic change in the funding mechanism is moving towards enactment without a hearing or thorough discussion of the purposes, options, and consequences. Therefore, we encourage Assembly members from the Chippewa Valley to oppose this provision when it reaches the Assembly floor, and members of the State Senate to ask the same questions we have about the amendment.

As you know, our local technical college, CVTC, has a strong track record of being responsive to our region's students, workers, employers, and communities. With the current funding mix, CVTC has proven to be a key economic asset to the region and a valuable resource for the business community. It fulfills a critical role in providing the workforce employers in our region depend upon, achieving success with 86 percent of its graduates staying in Wisconsin.

While we are always interested in ways to reduce property taxes, the CVTC percentage of local property tax bills is very low. The Chamber supported CVTC's most recent tax referendum, which was passed by voters overwhelmingly. We agree that the current system maintains local control and keeps CVTC accountable to the communities in which they serve. Although the prospect of state aid to replace property taxes sounds appealing, with the state controlling the purse strings, we fear that the state's poor track record in keeping previous funding promises could lead to future fiscal problems for the technical college system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David W. Minor".

David W. Minor, President & CEO
Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

Reply to: rogers@eauclairechamber.org 715-858-0616