

May 27, 2015

Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

As the voice of thousands of businesses and hundreds of thousands of workers throughout our state, the Chamber of Commerce signatories below are united in our concern over the proposed cuts to the University of Wisconsin System.

Innovative and prosperous companies are often found in the shadow of great universities and we are fortunate to have world-class universities throughout the state of Wisconsin. They are critical to each and every region's economic success. The UW System is a vital statewide asset. It serves as an economic engine, a hub for cutting-edge research that creates new businesses and jobs, and a draw for attracting and retaining world-class talent in both students and faculty.

The total economic impact on our state economy of the UW System is more than \$20 billion annually, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs, creating exciting startup businesses and generating an admirable talent pool for our future workforce.

Our level of concern is heightened by the fact that the flexibility originally proposed for the UW System has been eliminated, yet \$300 million in cuts remain on the table. The business community recognizes that you are wrestling with many competing priorities and extremely difficult financial decisions as you do the hard work of assembling the next state budget.

We encourage you, however, to ensure that the UW System's ability to sustain the economic benefits it provides throughout the state of Wisconsin is not compromised by cuts too large for the UW System to absorb.

We hope you agree that we cannot afford to stall this engine that fuels our state's economic success. Thank you for your public service and your commitment to growing Wisconsin jobs, businesses and prosperity.

Sincerely,



Zach Brandon
President, Greater
Madison Chamber of
Commerce



Tim Sheehy
President, Metropolitan
Milwaukee Association of
Commerce



Bob McCoy
President/CEO, Eau Claire
Area Chamber of
Commerce



Shannon Full
President/CEO,
Fox Cities
Chamber of
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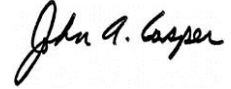
Laurie Radke
President, Greater Green
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Lou Molitor
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Michelle Dingwall
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Area Chamber of
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John Casper
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Keith Pilger
President of Board of
Directors, Portage County
Business Council



Chris Blasius
CEO, River Falls Area
Chamber of Commerce