

# JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

## *Senate Bill 231* *Technical College Resident Tuition* May 17, 2017

Good morning, members of the committee, and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Senate Bill 231, related to resident technical college fees for individuals receiving benefits transferred under federal law by active duty uniformed service members.

Last session, the Legislature passed 2015 Act 21, which mandated that certain veterans and eligible family members be charged resident fees (in-state tuition) regardless of their residency status, if the veteran had been discharged within the last three years. This brought Wisconsin in line with federal rules that required states to bring institutions into compliance by July 1, 2015, or risk losing certain benefits for student veterans attending those institutions. While a statutory change dealing with the technical colleges was necessary, the UW System was able to make a similar change internally through the Board of Regents.

In response to recent Congressional changes to those original federal requirements, which includes not only veterans, but individuals receiving transferred benefits from active duty service members, SB 231 provides an update to Wisconsin statutes in order to bring us back into compliance. Failure to do so by July 1, 2017, would again jeopardize the educational benefits of our student veterans. Staff from the Technical College System is here today as well, and can provide further information on the technical details of the changes being made.

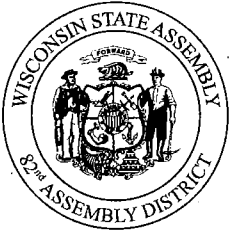
In an effort to prevent time-sensitive situation like this from occurring again, we have structured the bill language to more broadly reference that section of the US Code, so that any changes related to eligibility are properly mirrored in statute without requiring another bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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May 17, 2017

Chairman Petrowski and Members of the Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs,

Thank you for holding a public hearing today on SB 231, related to resident technical college fees for individuals receiving benefits transferred under federal law by active duty uniformed service members.

Last session, the Legislature passed 2015 Act 21, which brought Wisconsin into compliance with federal requirements that provided resident tuition to certain veterans and eligible family members attending technical colleges, regardless of their residency status, if the veteran had been discharged within the last three years. States were required to bring institutions into compliance by July 1, 2015, or risk losing certain benefits for student veterans attending those institutions. While a statutory change dealing with the technical colleges was necessary, the UW System was able to make a similar change internally through the Board of Regents.

In response to recent Congressional changes to those original federal requirements, AB 313 provides an update to Wisconsin statutes in order to bring us back into compliance. Failure to do so by July 1, 2017, would again jeopardize the educational benefits of our student veterans. Staff from the Technical College System is here today as well, and can provide further information on the technical details of the changes being made.

I appreciate your consideration on this bill and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,

*Ken Skowronski*