



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER #67

Relating to the Creation of the Governor's Task Force on Student Debt

WHEREAS, nationally 45 million students owe approximately \$1.6 trillion in student loan debt;

WHEREAS, student debt disproportionately affects students of color, low-income students, first-generation college students, women, veterans, and seniors;

WHEREAS, the average amount of student loan debt held by former students increased by nearly 85 percent between 2006 and 2018;

WHEREAS, according to a study by The Institute for College Access & Success for the class of 2018, 64 percent of students in Wisconsin graduated with student loan debt and averaged \$31,705 in student loan debt;

WHEREAS, one in five students in the United States are behind on their student loan payments;

WHEREAS, increasing tuition costs for students contributes not only to growing student loan debt, but personal debt more broadly as students rely on credit cards or other means to pay for tuition, housing, and other necessities while in school;

WHEREAS, 36 percent of college students in the United States say they have more than \$1,000 in credit card debt, and in 2019, credit card delinquency hit an eight-year high with more than eight percent of balances held by people ages 18 to 29 hitting serious delinquency after going more than 90 days overdue without payment;

WHEREAS, the consequences of student debt are not isolated to students as more families are taking on more debt to help their kids pay for school;

WHEREAS, in 2019, Parent PLUS Loan debt averaged \$25,600 with more than three million parents owing approximately \$88.9 billion in Parent PLUS Loans; and

WHEREAS, the financial burden of student debt has broad, adverse consequences for our state and our country's economies, including weakened spending and wealth accumulation, decreased home ownership, further entrenched income disparities, stifled entrepreneurship, and limitations on the ability of individuals to retire securely, among other negative effects.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TONY EVERS, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State, including Section 14.019 of the Wisconsin Statutes, do hereby create the Governor's Task Force on Student Debt ("Task Force"), and order the following:

1. The Task Force shall be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Financial Institutions or a designee. The Task Force membership shall be appointed by the Governor to serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The Task Force membership shall consist of:
 - a. The Governor or a designee;
 - b. The Executive Director of the State of Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board or a designee;
 - c. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection or a designee;
 - d. The State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction or a designee;
 - e. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs or a designee;
 - f. The President of the University of Wisconsin System or a designee;
 - g. The President of the Wisconsin Technical College System or a designee;
 - h. The President of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities or a designee;
 - i. Two members of the Wisconsin State Assembly, one representing each caucus;
 - j. Two members of the Wisconsin State Senate, one representing each caucus;
 - k. One representative from a Wisconsin Tribal Nation; and
 - l. Other individuals appointed by the Governor in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Financial Institutions to serve at the pleasure of the Governor, who may include individuals representing the business community, the academic community, the financial services industry, student loan borrowers, and parents of student loan borrowers.
2. The Task Force shall do the following:
 - a. Assess the causes of student debt and the challenges student debt creates for Wisconsinites, their families, and our state economy.
 - b. Evaluate the effectiveness of current policies relating to student debt.
 - c. Research best practices from industry, academia, and other states on reducing the burden of student debt.
 - d. Provide recommendations regarding:
 - i. How the state can best address the student debt crisis for Wisconsinites and their families;

- ii. Improving the State's financial literacy education and academic and career planning offerings and requirements that could help reduce the amount of debt taken on by Wisconsinites and their families;
- iii. Strategies for borrowers that could help reduce loan and education-related defaults and other negative consequences for Wisconsinites;
- iv. Strategies aimed at our most vulnerable populations struggling with student debt, including students of color, low-income students, first-generation students, women, veterans, and seniors;
- v. The State's role in preventing abusive practices and ensuring that loan companies do not take unreasonable advantage of borrowers;
- vi. Improving data collection and sharing on when and why student loan borrowers default to help borrowers, regulators, and law enforcement officials spot emerging risks;
- vii. The State's role in maintaining affordable and high-quality higher education institutions in the State that are financially accessible to Wisconsin families, including effective state support to higher education institutions and state-based financial aid;
- viii. Other programmatic and budgetary recommendations for consideration by the Governor and Legislature; and
- ix. Any other steps to address the student debt crisis in Wisconsin.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done in the City of Waukesha this twenty-ninth day of January in the year of two thousand twenty.

TONY EVERS
Governor

By the Governor:

DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE
Secretary of State