

## **Wisconsin Must Protect - Not Wreck – Its Technical Colleges!**

“Technical Colleges play a key role as the engine that drives economic development in the State of Wisconsin.” – Governor Scott McCallum, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, 1/16/02

**Technical College Budget Reform Priorities...** to protect Wisconsin's economic development engine by preserving services for students and businesses:

- 1. No "freeze" or new controls on local levies.**
  - Freezing local levies will result in major program and course cuts statewide, but *will not reduce the state deficit by one dollar.*
  - Freezing levies will result in turning away thousands of additional students from high-skill, high-wage training just as an economic downturn results in increased waiting lists and increased enrollment pressure.
  - A freeze results in cutting current programs and enrollments because of commitments made for next year to accommodate new equipment, technology, and other unavoidable costs.
  - A freeze eliminates the ability to implement planned new capacity in nursing, public safety and other critical programs, despite growing enrollment and growing wait lists.
  - Colleges have already undertaken major efficiency efforts and cost reductions, and respond rapidly to changing local community needs (modifying/ending/creating hundreds of programs in recent years, and providing thousands of customized training programs to business and industry each year).
  
- 2. No additional cuts to already weakened state funding commitments.**
  - Unlike most agencies and governments, state funding for the WTCS was already cut in the 2001-03 state budget approximately \$5 million from base year 2001. (Funding for the UW System increased approximately \$40 million for the same period).
  - A proposed new 4.5% across-the-board cut (\$6.2 million per year beginning in 2002), further reduces programs/courses and increases already huge waiting lists.
  - Cuts to State support fall disproportionately on some of the state's poorest areas with the highest unemployment rates.
  - State support for technical colleges has eroded from 37% of costs in 1980 to less than 20% today, and still falling.
  - "Across the Board" cuts do not allow the WTCS (State) Board or WTCS Colleges to prioritize our response to the State's most critical workforce training needs.
  
- 3. Maintain remaining TOP Grant Program for current students (current law).**
  - TOP Grants for recent Wisconsin high school graduates to attend technical colleges fulltime were already cut (over by \$4 million) reducing grants from \$1,000 to \$500.
  - Ending all TOP funding for recent high school graduates abruptly in July, 2002, in order to fund dislocated worker grants, negatively affects thousands of students already counting on grant availability for programs beginning in a few short months.
  - Dislocated workers are already served through other grant funds and through employer contracts with the WTCS to train/retrain laid-off workers.

## Wisconsin Technical Colleges -- The State's Key Economic Engine

- We train and retrain the State's most critically needed workers: **police officers, fire fighters, nurses, utility workers, computer technicians, plumbers, electricians,** and dozens of others -- the economic backbone of safe and healthy communities.
- **These WTCS-trained Wisconsinites create more than \$2 in new tax revenue for every \$1 dollar of total state and local funding invested in the WTCS!**<sup>1</sup>.
- Our graduates overwhelmingly stay in state. Each one year of fulltime WTCS training creates an average \$3,940 more per year in Wisconsin earnings<sup>1</sup> - year after year - creating higher tax revenues and lower deficits.
- As of April, 2001, more than 7,000 Wisconsinites were on WTCS waiting lists *after* 2001-02 classes were admitted. This number would be much higher except that colleges cap lists when they reach 4-5 years long.
- Raising capacity to accommodate persons already on waiting lists would create tens of millions in new Wisconsin earnings and tax revenues.
- **Technical College enrollments go up when the economy goes down.** Enrollments were up by nearly 3% in 2000-01 and are projected to increase 3% again in 2001-02 (an increase of the equivalent of more than 3,000 fulltime students). Several districts report 6% or higher enrollment gains for 2001-02.

### More Information:

Contact your local Technical College District President's office, or...

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1. Figures are from/based on *The Socioeconomic Benefits Generated by the Wisconsin Technical College System* (Executive Summary), Dr. Kjell Christophersen and Dr. Henry Robison, CCBenefits, Inc., 12/20/01.