Major Cuts to Tech Colleges Will Slow Job Creation

Wisconsin’s job creators count on Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) graduates to meet their employment needs, but this will be increasingly challenging under the proposed State Budget.

Technical colleges, such as Madison Area Technical College, have always served an important role as local economies rebound from recession. In fact, statewide enrollment is up 40 percent over the past decade alone.

The proposed state budget bill (AB 40 and SB 27) would cut state support for technical colleges by 30 percent ($36 million annually) and impose a strict freeze on local revenue for technical colleges. This is the largest proportional state support cut for all forms of public education and local government. It will inhibit responsiveness to job creators.

Wisconsin’s 16 technical colleges, including Madison College, understand the State is facing a major deficit. However, the state budget sets priorities and can make job creation a much more powerful priority by better helping technical colleges help job creators and those seeking great new jobs.

While state support for technical colleges has remained essentially flat for more than 10 years, enrollment increases have eroded the state’s investment behind each technical college student. This erosion will be greatly accelerated under the proposed state budget. Wisconsinites, and especially Wisconsin’s job creators, need their technical colleges to remain strong and responsive. This does not require a larger state budget. It requires only that the state legislature recognize the priority we must all place on jobs.

Whether a major employer seeks to add jobs or, worse, faces layoffs or closing, a technical college will respond rapidly. This responsiveness is threatened by a strict new local revenue freeze, especially on top of a 30 percent cut in state support. A major benefit of Wisconsin’s business climate is the education and training the technical colleges provide employers. It’s what makes the technical colleges unique.

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Madison Area Technical College serves approximately 40,000 individuals annually, providing “real world smart” education through a comprehensive curriculum of technical, liberal arts and sciences, adult basic education and continuing education, as well as customized training for employers.