

**RESOLUTION  
ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

SUPERVISORS THOMAS  
BRIEN AND KARA HAWES  
INITIATED BY



CORPORATION COUNSEL  
RICHARD GREENLEE  
DRAFTED BY

COUNTY BOARD STAFF  
SUBMITTED BY

March 20, 2019  
DATE DRAFTED

**SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HIGHER EDUCATION AND LOWER STUDENT DEBT**

1 WHEREAS, as student debt has continued to climb, it is clear there is an immediate need for  
2 action to ensure higher education remain an affordable option for students both during their college years  
3 and during their repayment period; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, according to the New York Federal Reserve, total student debt nationwide has  
6 tripled in the past decade and now exceeds all credit card debt in the United States. Research done by  
7 One Wisconsin Institute shows that nearly thirty percent of households in the state are currently paying a  
8 student loan. Current policies prevent borrowers from being able to refinance to take advantage of low  
9 interest rates and make it nearly impossible to discharge student loans through bankruptcy; and  
10

11 WHEREAS, the growing student debt burden has direct impacts on our state and local economy.  
12 Residents with student loan debt were more likely to forego the purchase of a new vehicle and more likely  
13 to rent rather than own a home. Funds tied to student loan payments are not available for discretionary  
14 spending at local businesses, stalling the engine of our local economy; and  
15

16 WHEREAS, in addition to borrowing, we recognize that need-based aid such as the Pell grant is  
17 essential to many students' ability to afford a college education. The federal government must find ways  
18 to strengthen and sustain this aid if education is to continue to be a path to greater equality in our  
19 community and an opportunity to ensure that every individual, regardless of socioeconomic status, has the  
20 opportunity to succeed; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, it is important for student borrows to have access to a variety of repayment options  
23 in order to best fit their needs and goals. Current repayment options also include a possibility of loan  
24 forgiveness after ten years of repayment during employment in public service or with a government  
25 employer. As a government employer, we must do our part to ensure employees are aware of this option  
26 and potential benefit of employment with Rock County.  
27

28 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors, on this  
29 11<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2019, does hereby direct the Department of Human Resources to  
30 ensure each employee is notified annually that they may be eligible for public service loan forgiveness of  
31 federal direct loans repaid during their employment with Rock County and that the Department of Human  
32 Resources is further directed to, upon request for an employee, complete any necessary paperwork to  
33 provide proof of employment to those employees who are eligible.  
34

35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors urges Congress to  
36 adopt legislation which would allow borrowers to refinance existing student loan debt to address the  
37 growing student loan debt crisis.  
38

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors urges the State  
40 Legislature to support the state Higher Ed, Lower Debt bill, which would allow borrowers to refinance  
41 loans and create a tax break for state residents actively paying back student loans.  
42

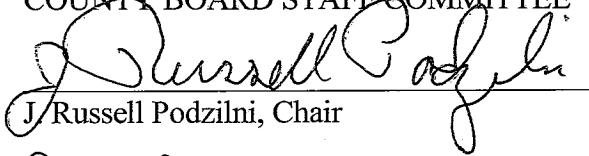
43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors urges state and  
44 federal leaders to pursue additional solutions to the student debt burden, including policies that invest in  
45 the Pell grant program, reduce interest rates for future loans, and ensure tuition is affordable.  
46

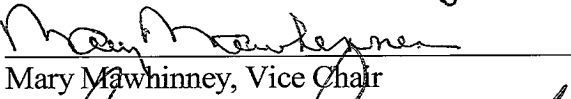
47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors recognizes the State  
48 of Wisconsin for its effort in reducing the cost of education in the University of Wisconsin System.

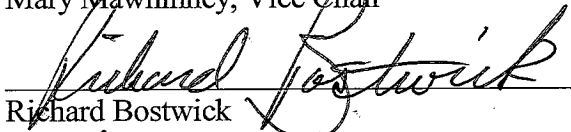
49  
50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk be authorized and directed to send a copy  
51 of this resolution to Governor Evers, the office of each member of congress representing the citizens of  
52 Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

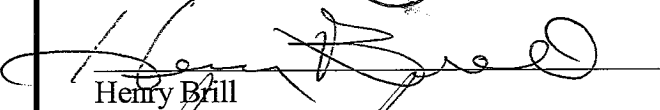
Respectfully submitted:

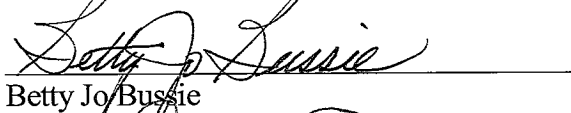
COUNTY BOARD STAFF COMMITTEE

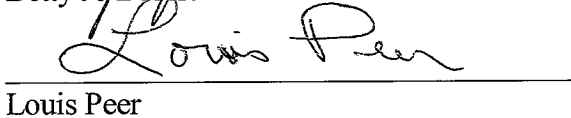
  
J. Russell Podzilni, Chair

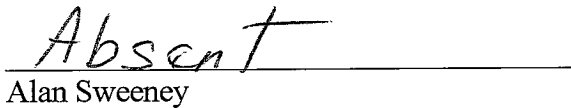
  
Mary Mawhinney, Vice Chair

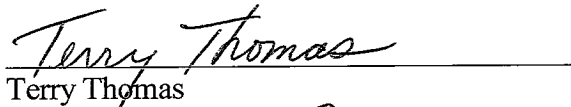
  
Richard Bostwick

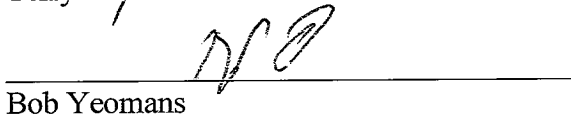
  
Henry Brill

  
Betty Jo Bussie

  
Louis Peer

  
Alan Sweeney

  
Terry Thomas

  
Bob Yeomans

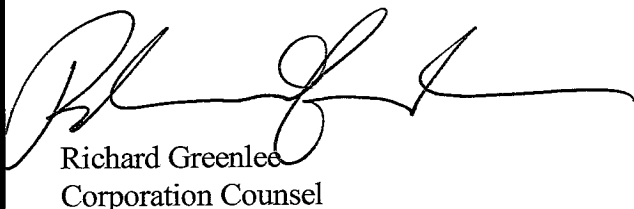
FISCAL NOTE:

No fiscal impact to the County.

  
Sherry Oja  
Finance Director


LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take action to inform and assist its employees with navigating student loan forgiveness programs pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 59.51. The remaining parts of the resolution are advisory only.

  
Richard Greenlee  
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Matter of policy.

  
Josh Smith  
County Administrator