



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

January 25, 2019

Chancellor Rebecca Blank
161 Bascom Hall
500 Lincoln Drive
Madison, WI 53706

Dear Chancellor Blank:

We are writing today to express our support for academic freedom and constitutionally protected freedom of speech which again seems to be under attack by Representative Dave Murphy. We write to support Professor Mayer and other faculty and staff whose job it is to expose students to a range of thought provoking issues and perspectives so that students can develop their own opinions and values. As important, we write to support each students' right to attend courses on a public campus that aren't edited by state legislators who may disagree with the sources and the content of the curriculum.

We value the academic freedom that has historically been the foundation of the entire UW System, where rigorous academic debate should be encouraged, not threatened. Attempting to silence professors who are challenging students to learn and grow as independent, critical thinkers stifles academic freedom and stunts the academic experience of our young adults. But it also chills constitutionally protected First Amendment expression. State legislators, who control state funding for the UW system, should not be intimidating, targeting, or retaliating against a teacher because he or she exercised their constitutionally protected speech, regardless of whether a legislator politically agrees. This indeed leads to the "chilling" of speech, and a stifling of the rigorous and provocative discourse in which we expect our students to be engaged in the UW System.

The mission of UW-Madison states that its primary purpose "is to provide a learning environment in which faculty, staff and students can discover, examine critically, preserve and transmit the knowledge, wisdom and values that will help ensure the survival of this and future generations and improve the quality of life for all." This mission cannot be accomplished when politicians attempt to censor the content of courses to suit their own political purposes.

Sincerely,

Rep. Chris Taylor
76th Assembly District


Rep. Shelia Stubbs
77th Assembly District

Rep. Jimmy Anderson
47th Assembly District

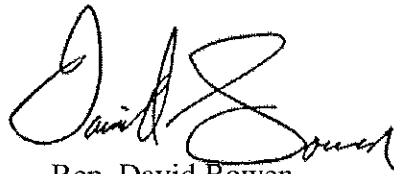
Rep. Jonathan Brostoff
19th Assembly District

Senator Lena Taylor
4th Senate District

Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa
8th Assembly District



Rep. Sondy Pope
80th Assembly District



Rep. David Bowen
10th Assembly District

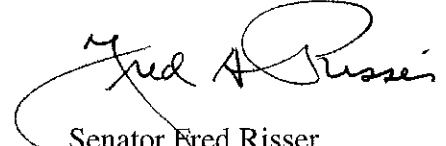


Rep. Dianne Hesselbein
79th Assembly District



Rep. Lisa Subeck
78th Assembly District

Rep. Jason Fields
11th Assembly District



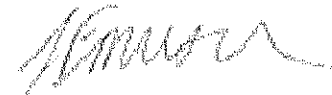
Senator Fred Risser
26th Senate District



Senator Chris Larson
7th Senate District



Rep. Gary Hebl
46th Assembly District



Rep. Jodi Emerson
91st Assembly District