



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

Hon. Governor Scott Walker  
Office of the Governor  
Room 115 East, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Senator Alberta Darling  
Room 317 East  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53703

January 5, 2017

Dear Governor Walker:

Together, we have accomplished so many things since your inauguration in 2011. Through our combined efforts, we have and will continue to make a difference and improve the future for all of the citizens in this state.

The incoming Trump Administration gives the State of Wisconsin the perfect opportunity to request and seek approval of federal waivers to create sliding scales in public benefits programs administered by state agencies. Excessive federal regulations restrict the use of federal block grant revenue, which inhibits the state from eliminating fiscal cliffs. Those cliffs disincentivize some of the most vulnerable in our society from climbing the economic ladder. A central part of President-elect Trump's campaign was championing job creation and social mobility. Further, Speaker Paul Ryan made public assistance reform a key part of his *A Better Way* agenda. With these energetic reformers at the helm of the federal government, Wisconsin can take a big step forward and request waivers to end the fiscal cliff effects that help create a cycle of poverty.

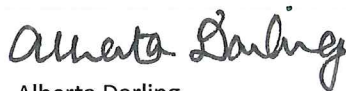
As you know, an individual on a public assistance program reaches a fiscal cliff when they hit the financial eligibility threshold for the program. At this point the individual may turn down promotions, better job offers, or raises because the raise or promotion would cause the individual to lose healthcare benefits, childcare benefits, FoodShare benefits, or benefits associated with a variety of other public assistance programs. In many cases, there is an easy solution, the creation of a sliding scale.

A sliding scale alleviates fiscal cliffs by incrementally reducing public assistance benefits as an individual's income rises. This scale is crucial to ending disincentives to work. Eliminating the financial disincentive gives individuals the freedom to move off of financial assistance towards self-sufficiency as smoothly as possible. Allowing individuals to earn higher salaries will certainly benefit them and their families, but it will also benefit our society and help reduce our workforce shortage.

We know you have already requested your agencies look at options for seeking federal waivers to create flexibilities and provide services more efficiently and effectively to taxpayers. With this letter we are renewing the call that state agencies should investigate which public benefits programs they administer have fiscal cliffs and request waivers to allow them to deviate from burdensome and unnecessary federal regulations and use federal block grant funding to create and implement sliding scales. We hope that you will include the concept of a sliding scale as your agencies look for flexibilities from the federal government.

With your leadership, in concert with the incoming Trump Administration and majorities in Congress dedicated to increasing job growth and social mobility the time is right to act on this issue which has hindered efforts to move some of the most vulnerable populations in our society to self-sufficiency.

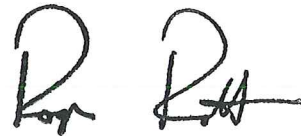
Respectfully,



Alberta Darling  
State Senator  
8<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Robin Vos  
Speaker  
63<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District



Roger Roth  
State Senator  
19<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Sheila Harsdorf  
State Senator  
10<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Robert Cowles  
State Senator  
2<sup>nd</sup> Senate District



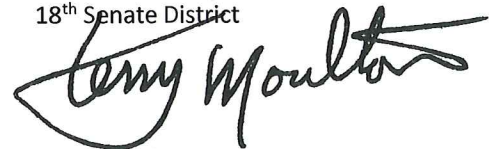
Dan Feyen  
State Senator  
18<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Chris Kapenga  
State Senator  
33<sup>rd</sup> Senate District



Howard Marklein  
State Senator  
17<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Terry Moulton  
State Senator  
23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District

Luther Olsen  
State Senator  
14<sup>th</sup> Senate District

Jerry Petrowski  
State Senator  
29<sup>th</sup> Senate District

Duey Stroebel  
State Senator  
20<sup>th</sup> Senate District

Patrick Testin  
State Representative  
27<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Joan Ballweg  
State Representative  
41<sup>st</sup> Assembly District

Leah Vukmir  
State Senator  
5<sup>th</sup> Senate District

Scott Allen  
State Representative  
97 Assembly District

Kathy Bernier  
State Representative  
68<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Mark Born  
State Representative  
39<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Janel Brandtjen  
State Representative  
22<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District

Ed Brooks  
State Representative  
50<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Don Gannon  
State Representative  
58<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Rob Hutton  
State Representative  
13<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Adam Jarchow  
State Representative  
28<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Dan Knodl  
State Representative  
24<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Scott Krog  
State Representative  
72<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District

Bob Kulp  
State Representative  
69<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Keith Ripp  
State Representative  
42<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District

Jessie Rodriguez  
State Representative  
21<sup>st</sup> Assembly District

John Spiros  
State Representative  
86<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Jeremy Thiesfeldt  
State Representative  
52<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District

Romaine Quinn  
State Representative  
75<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Joel Kleefisch  
State Representative  
38<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Tyler Vorpapel  
State Representative  
27<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Van Wanggaard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Van" and last name "Wanggaard" clearly distinguishable.

Van Wanggaard  
State Senator  
21<sup>st</sup> Senate District