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Strengthening Wisconsin.*

TESTIMONY OF PROFESSOR JUDITH BURSTYN, REPRESENTING THE UW-MADISON FACULTY, IN OPPOSITION TO SPECIAL SESSION SENATE BILL 11

February 15, 2011

My name is Judith Burstyn. I am a Professor of Chemistry and Chair of the elected executive committee of the Faculty Senate, at UW-Madison. I am also Chair of the Board of Directors of PROFS, representing the UW-Madison faculty.

We appreciate the gravity of the state budget situation. We are willing to do our part to help. We are realistic in expecting budget cuts and sacrifices on the part of employees. But to maintain our stature as a world-class institution, we also need to be given the flexibility to effectively manage our own operations in a manner that respects our current processes and employees.

The faculty are supportive of Chancellor Biddy Martin's initiative to gain flexibility for our campus through the New Badger Partnership. The partnership needs to be implemented in such a way that it does not have a negative impact on our competitiveness or our governance processes. Unfortunately, Special Session Senate Bill 11 does not meet these standards, so PROFS must oppose the bill as currently drafted.

Competitive Compensation. Through its state-of-the-art teaching and research, UW-Madison trains the workforce of the state and generates new technologies for commercialization. To remain a world-class institution, we must attract and retain the very best talent in the world. As things currently stand, our salaries are not competitive with our academic peers; however, the high quality of life in Madison and the excellent benefits have enabled UW to successfully attract top talent despite lower salary levels.

The proposed changes that require dramatically increased payment for retirement and health care will only make our competitive position worse. Without the flexibility to set competitive compensation, UW-Madison simply cannot compete effectively for top talent on the international stage.

Collective Bargaining. The Faculty Senate adopted a set of principles for the New Badger Partnership, including that the right to union representation should not be infringed. The governor's budget repair bill violates this principle.

Part of what makes UW-Madison so great is having our own governance processes that involve working with thoughtful and cooperative people at all levels who want representation in the process. That is why it is important for this bill to be amended to again allow collective bargaining rights as they currently exist and to commit to increased flexibility for UW-Madison

Thank you.