



# OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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## **Treasurer Frerichs Stands with College Students to Urge a Resolution on MAP Grant Funding** *5,400 Students Affected at ISU, Wesleyan and Heartland as Uncertainty Threatens Middle Class*

**NORMAL** - Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs today urged Governor Bruce Rauner and the Illinois General Assembly to approve tuition assistance to students and relieve the financial uncertainty of nearly 130,000 middle class families who budgeted the financial aid into their payment plan.

The financial aid helps pay for tuition and fees that typically are due before classes start. Frerichs called for action because students still are waiting for the tuition assistance even after classes have begun. Short-changing students and universities needlessly injects uncertainty into the business community. Employers look to higher education to create the highly skilled and trainable workforce that is needed to respond to changing market conditions.

“A college education opens doors for life-long employment and feeds the pipeline of reliable workers that Illinois employers require,” Frerichs said. “The state has kept its word when it promised tax incentives to a new business, so it only is fair that the state keeps its word to students who were promised financial aid.”

In June, the Governor vetoed the budget, including \$397 million for the Monetary Award Program (MAP grants), which provides tuition assistance to Illinois residents who demonstrated financial need. Disagreeing with that decision, the Senate earlier this month approved \$373 million in grant funding, the same funding level the Governor initially proposed. The Governor has threatened another veto should the House also approve the tuition assistance. The House could consider the legislation this week.

In Bloomington/Normal, an estimated 5,392 students struggle to pay bills because an estimated \$18.1 million in promised MAP grants have not been dispersed. The details: Illinois State University (4,281 students and \$15.3 million), Illinois Wesleyan University (475 and \$2.2 million) and Heartland Community College (636 and \$550,000).

“The MAP program is very important to those students who have the greatest need for financial assistance,” Richard F. Wilson, President Illinois Wesleyan University said. “These grants are awarded to students who attend every college and university in the state. At Illinois Wesleyan, we have more than 400 MAP students, or slightly more than 20 percent of our student body, who rely on this important assistance program. We hope that the state can find a way to continue to support students at colleges and

universities across the state.”

Employers cite Illinois’ robust higher education system and certified job training programs as a significant factor in location decisions. A college degree or apprentice certificate shows employers that the individual can be trained and retrained as needed. Underfunding higher education needlessly presents uncertainty to our job creators.

Tuition assistance and an operating budget for public colleges and universities across Illinois remain among the few items in limbo two months into the new fiscal year.

“Surely we all agree that ensuring middle class and low-income students have the opportunity to earn a good education needs to be a top priority,” said Frerichs, who as a State Senator represented the University of Illinois and was chairman of the Higher Education Committee.

### **About the Illinois Treasurer**

The Illinois Treasurer is the state’s Chief Investment Officer and Frerichs is a Certified Public Finance Officer. He protects consumers by encouraging savings plans for college or trade school, increasing financial education among all ages, and removing barriers to a secure retirement. As the state’s Chief Investment Officer, he actively manages approximately \$25 billion. Currently, the portfolio includes \$13 billion in state funds, \$7 billion in college savings plans and \$5 billion on behalf of local and state governments. The investment approach is cautious to ensure the preservation of capital and returns \$28 to the state for every \$1 spent in operations. The Treasurer’s office predates Illinois’ incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office.

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