

Regents' Position on Domestic Partner Benefits and the Constitutional Amendment Concerning Marriage.

BUSINESS, FINANCE, and AUDIT COMMITTEE

Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents, in Resolution 8817, endorsed state group health insurance for domestic partners of all state employees, and requested that group health insurance premiums for domestic partners of University of Wisconsin System employees be funded in the same way as for all other state employees; and

WHEREAS, more than 150 colleges and universities now offer health insurance benefits to domestic partners, including all Big Ten Schools except UW-Madison; and

WHEREAS, thousands of private employers across the United States currently offer domestic partner health benefits, including companies both headquartered, and doing business in Wisconsin such as Alliant Energy, CUNA Mutual Insurance Group, Oscar Mayer, Ameritech, Northern States Power, American Express, General Motors, and DaimlerChrysler; and

WHEREAS, the lack of domestic partner medical benefits, further limits the UW System's ability to recruit faculty and staff; and

WHEREAS, the recruitment and retention of high-quality faculty and staff is predicated on an inclusive climate that supports all individuals; and

WHEREAS, both branches of the Wisconsin State Legislature have approved a joint resolution to amend the state's constitution by creating a new section 13 of article XIII with the following language: "Only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state. A legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized in this state;" and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2006, this proposed amendment will be brought before the voters of the state of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, by prohibiting recognition of a legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals, the amendment, if adopted, would create substantial uncertainty, including potential legal challenges, about the ability to provide employment benefits to domestic partners."

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that, the Board of Regents stands in opposition to the proposed Constitutional Amendment Concerning Marriage.