

PRESS RELEASE

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NASS TO TEACHING ASSISTANTS: DO YOUR JOB OR BE FIRED

Representative Steve Nass (R-Palmyra), Chairman of the Assembly Labor Committee, condemned the actions of the UW-Madison Teaching Assistants Association for calling a two-day strike that started today. He also condemned a threat from the union to have teaching assistants withhold grades at the end of the semester if the contract dispute with the state isn't settled by mid-May.

“State employees are prohibited by law from striking. Governor Doyle’s Administration must take severe disciplinary actions against any teaching assistant that fails to show for class the next two-days. It is time for UW-Madison to join the real world. If the teaching assistants withhold grades then they must be fired,” Nass said.

Nass noted that the average teaching assistant at UW-Madison already makes \$12,144 for working 20 hours weekly during the nine-month school year. Teaching assistants also get free tuition as they continue to pursue graduate degrees.

The most recent contract offer from the state would provide a 0% salary increase in the 2004-2005 school year and a 4.6% increase in the 2005-2006 school year. The state is also asking teaching assistants to join all other state employees in paying a small amount monthly for health insurance premiums. Those monthly premiums depending on which insurance option the employee selects would range from \$9 to \$50 for individuals and \$27.50 to \$125 for families.

“The refusal of teaching assistants to pay a small part of health insurance premiums is a direct slap in the face for every taxpayer in Wisconsin. The Legislature must approve all state contracts and there is little chance of the their contract being approved without these employees paying something for health insurance,” Nass said.

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