



March 3, 2025

The Honorable Chip Neiman
House Speaker, Wyoming State Legislature
State Capitol, 200 West 24th Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

Re: Veto of House Enrolled Act No. 45/House Bill 0036 - Hathaway Scholarship Amendments

Dear Speaker Neiman,

Pursuant to my constitutional authority, I am vetoing House Enrolled Act 45, which expands the definition of “certificate” within the Hathaway Scholarship Program to include a broader range of trade certificate programs. While I have consistently advocated for an expansion of Career and Technical Education (CTE), I have also advocated for a separate scholarship specific to the trades since becoming Treasurer in 2012. While I fully support efforts to strengthen workforce development in Wyoming, this bill compromises the integrity of the Hathaway Scholarship, which is already overtaxed by diverting resources in a way that diminishes its long-term value to students regardless of their educational ambitions.

The Hathaway Scholarship was established in 2006 to provide Wyoming students with a strong academic foundation and financial support to pursue higher education or structured career pathways that lead to meaningful and sustained employment. It has been broadened and deepened over the years, diminishing both its original intent and its current capacity. Further expanding the definition of “certificate” to include short-term training programs dilutes the scholarships’s effectiveness even more, further weakens its original intent, and risks stretching limited resources too thin. Already the promise of a “full” scholarship is beyond the Hathaway Permanent Fund’s capacity to fully fund without backstopping it from the Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account.

This legislation does not include any means to increase earnings from the Hathaway endowment fund necessary to support the expanded eligibility raising concerns about the sustainability of the program overall or its value to any student. Without an increase in available funding, this expansion could place additional financial strain on the Hathaway Scholarship, potentially reducing the level of support available to students. Responsible fiscal stewardship requires that any expansion of state-funded programs be accompanied by a clear funding mechanism to ensure

long-term viability. Preferably, the Legislature should consider endowing a separate permanent fund dedicated to supporting CTE and trades education.

I encourage the legislature to collaborate on leveraging existing programs like Wyoming Works or exploring alternative solutions that expand workforce training opportunities without diminishing the integrity, viability, or value of the Hathaway Scholarship. Investing in targeted workforce development programs — distinct from the Hathaway framework — would better serve Wyoming students while preserving the high standards that have defined the scholarship's success. I am committed to supporting efforts that develop and fund workforce training initiatives that enhance, rather than undermine, our existing higher education investments.

For these reasons, I respectfully veto House Enrolled Act 45.

Sincerely,



Mark Gordon
Governor

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cc: The Honorable Bo Biteman, President of the Senate
Chief Clerk, Wyoming House of Representatives
Chief Clerk, Wyoming Senate
The Honorable Chuck Gray, Secretary of State