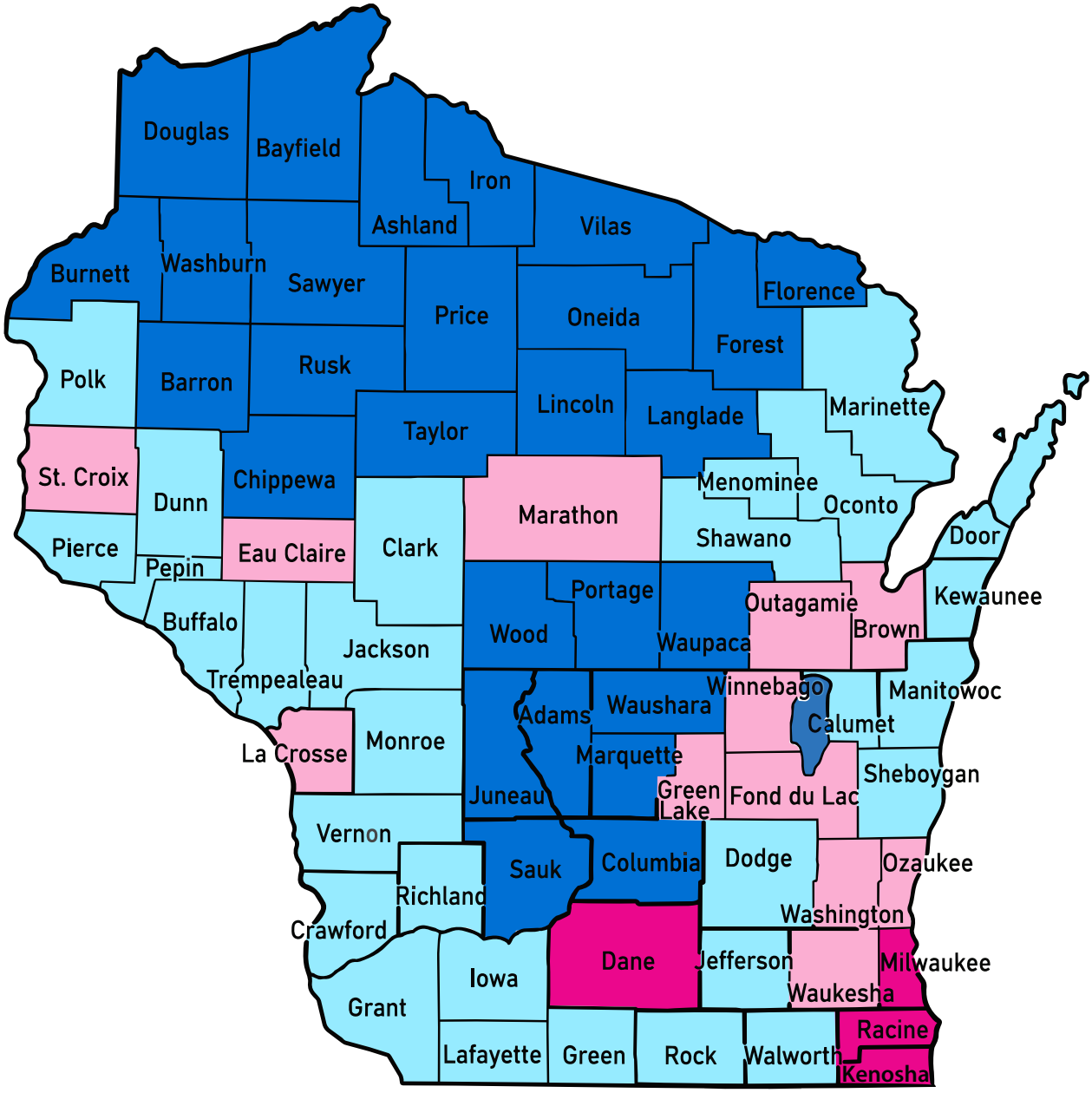
Counter Report
Rural Wisconsin Attorney Recruitment



For: Wisconsin Supreme Court Justices
From: Julie Coates and William A. Draves,
Gender Equity in Education, Presque Isle, Wisconsin
Date: August 2026

Rural Wisconsin Attorney Recruitment

A response to the Court's "Attorney Recruitment and Retention" report.

Executive Summary

The Court and the Justices individually are to be commended for recognizing this issue and seeking a solution.

The Court's appointed committee report was inadequate. In its process, incorrectly identified possible causes, insufficient recommendations, it ignored the cause and solution.

The cause for rural Wisconsin's lack of attorneys is a decline in young male attorneys. Your concern about attorney recruitment for rural Wisconsin is to be commended. That decline, in turn, is caused by gender discrimination in Wisconsin secondary schools, colleges and universities, and in the Wisconsin Law School. It can be solved in Wisconsin simply and with no-cost to anybody, especially taxpayers.

The no-cost, fast acting solution is to ban behavior in grading (GPA) and admission to higher education. It is the necessary, sufficient and only solution. Wisconsin secondary schools, colleges and universities and the Wisconsin Law School simply need to comply with Title IX, the law of the land, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Here we describe how Title IX is ignored with respect to males, as well as the proof the solution works.

Some 40,000 smart Wisconsin boys are denied access to university every year, boys who test just as highly as current and graduated students with a 4 year degree. That in turn, results in an even smaller pipeline into law school, resulting in a numerical, percentage and market shortage of young male attorneys in rural Wisconsin.

With 30 years of experience in researching the issue, the authors respectfully submit that our research, data, facts, and proposed solution be considered by the Court and its Justices.

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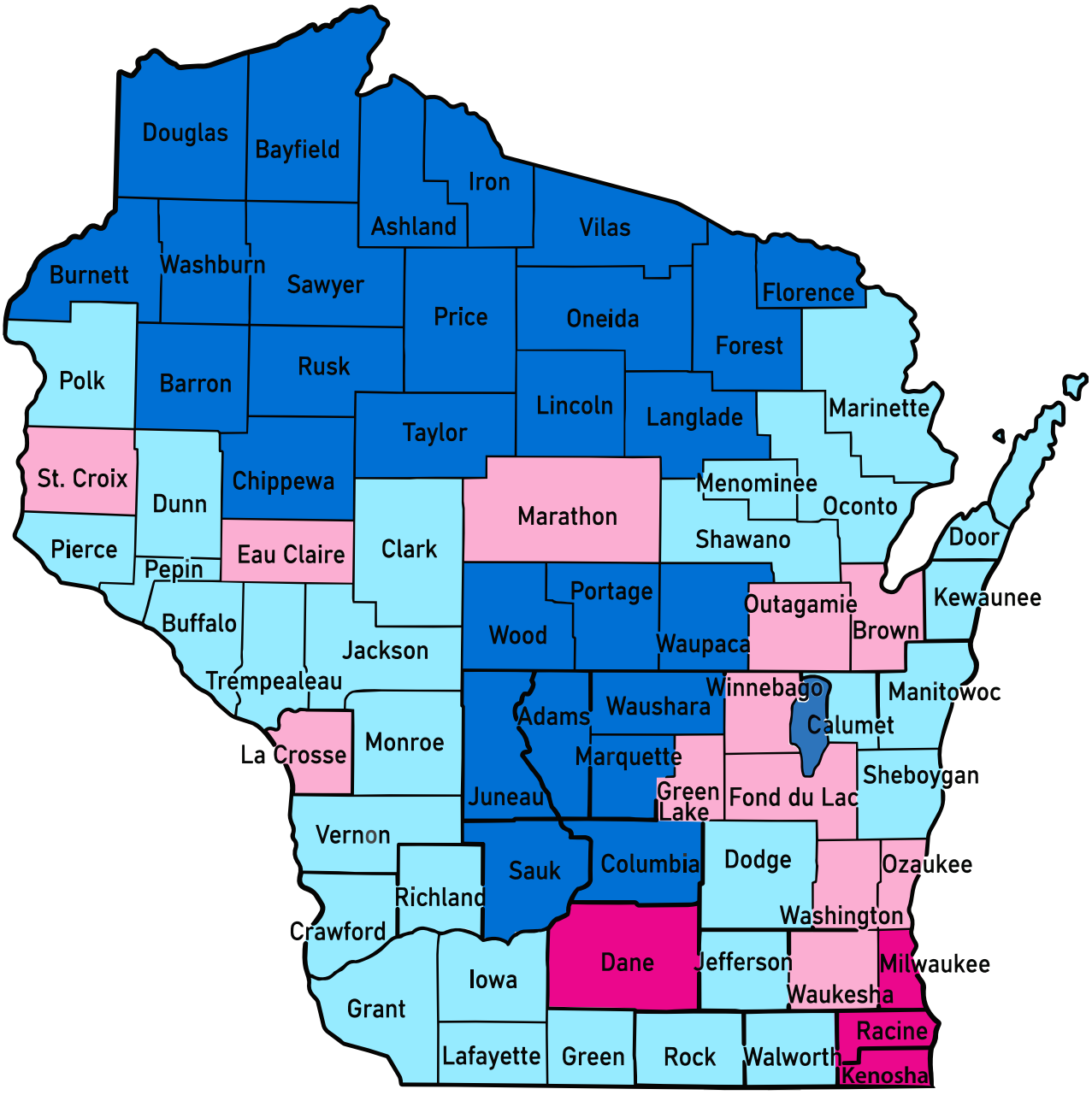
Male and Female Attorneys in Wisconsin



Data acquired from the Wisconsin State Bar Association. The map shows median average active attorneys by sex and county for Wisconsin. The current female attorney percentage for the state is 35%.

The color code is:

Dark Pink= Female attorneys 37% and above.

Light Pink= Female attorneys 35% to 36%.

Light Blue= Female attorneys 34% to 33%.

Dark Blue= Female attorneys 32% and below.

The Imbalance in Rural Wisconsin

As the data shows, and the Court clearly knows, there is a gender imbalance in attorneys practicing in rural Wisconsin. As you also know, the percentage of female attorneys is growing. For those attorneys age 40 and under, the percentage of female attorneys is already 51% and growing. (1) While certain professional fields and subspecialties are statistically over represented by one sex or another, most of those situations have a biological or neurology reason for being preferred by one sex or another. With the law profession, no data or research concludes that female or male attorneys are naturally more suited to the law.

Female Attorneys Are Reticent to Practice in Rural Wisconsin

The Court's own committee and other sources vaguely refer to structural challenges as to the relative minority of female attorneys in rural Wisconsin. It is instead a natural proclivity based on fundamental and legitimate female professional and lifestyle needs apparent in other professions with college-educated women.

A summary of the research (2) says that currently married women are more likely to move to a rural area ***if*** their spouse or partner can also find employment in that rural area. For the increasing number of single, divorced, widowed and otherwise unmarried female attorneys there is a relative or quantitative lack or limited access to those non-work needed groups and services in comparison with more urban areas of the state.

There is also research and studies about why male professionals, either single or married, with or without children in their care, are more likely to be comfortable with respect to non-work needs in rural areas.

The Cause of the Decline in Male Attorneys

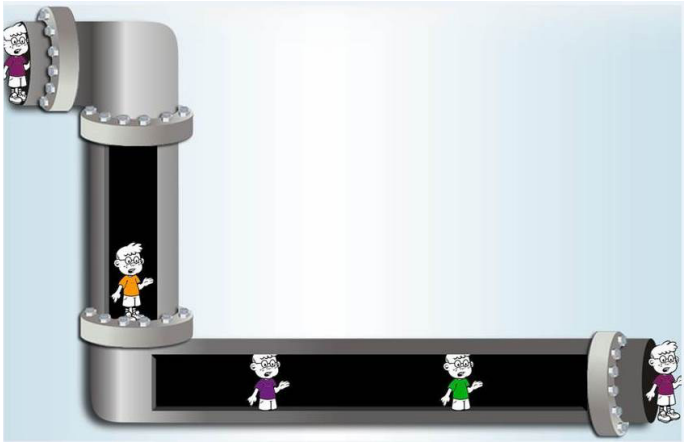
As the Court knows, rural areas are losing attorneys, primarily through the retirement of older male attorneys. Here's what we know.

1.Male law school graduates have declined by 10,000 since 2019. (3)

The decline is both as a percentage of law school graduates, but also as a numerical number. The reason for the decline is that fewer males are being admitted to law school. Male law school applicants score just as highly on the LSAT exam as female applicants. Male law school students do receive worse grades than female law school students, for reasons that we describe here. We don't know if male retention rates are the same as the female retention rate at law schools, but it might be worse. Certainly undergraduate colleges and universities fail to retain their male students at the same rate as their female students. (4) And we know there is no literature or even anecdotal evidence that males graduating from law school today perform worse than the females graduating from law school today.

2. The Wisconsin Law School is an example. The law school not only admits fewer male students, but also gives male students worse grades. (5)

Like in other disciplines, males in graduate school at UW are the best-of-the-best in terms of surviving gender-biased GPAs. They survive as one of the minority of boys graduating with higher GPAs from high school. They survive as one of the minority of young men graduating with high enough GPAs from undergraduate university. At the end of the pipeline, it is so narrow for males that the GPA gap between males and females is less than in high school and university. But there should be no gender gap in law school, where males score equally well on LSATs and have no gender related issues with finding employment after passing the bar exam.



3.Male college graduates have declined since 2014. (6)

There are simply not enough males in the attorney pipeline. At each stage of education, beginning in elementary school on through graduate school, males receive significantly worse grades than females, in violation of Title IX, (7) reducing by millions the number of boys graduating from high school who are accepted for university, and reducing by thousands the number of male college graduates who are accepted for law school.

There are now 1.2 million fewer American college students than ten years ago. (8) Some 80% or 1.0 million of those students are male.

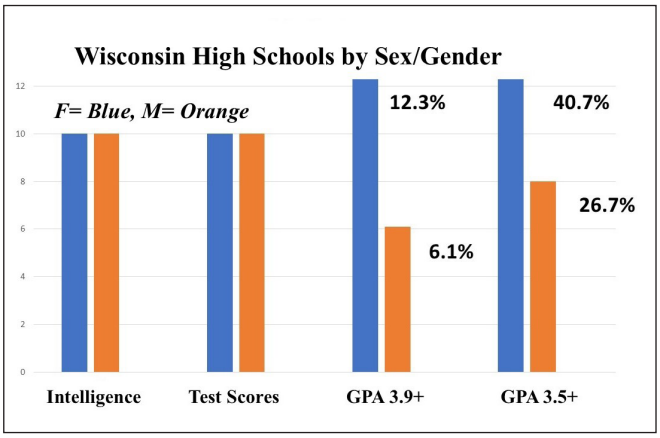
Colleges are closing, including UW two year colleges statewide, and other results damaging to society have become increasingly apparent in the state and society. (9)

The percentage of males graduating from college with a 4 year degree has declined from 50%, or gender parity, in 1981, downward to just 41% or even 38%. (10) It is worth noting that when Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* (11) in 1964, she noted that only 38% of 4 year graduates were women, a situation which justifiably appalled American society and led to the passage of Title IX. Title IX was, of course, opposed by many in education, (12) just as schools and teachers opposed the proposed ban on beating boys 100 years ago. (13)

4.Wisconsin elementary and secondary schools are biased against boys.

In addition to the major violation of Title IX going on throughout schools and colleges in Wisconsin (and the U.S.), Wisconsin schools violated the Wisconsin Open Records Act until they were forced recently to reveal GPAs by sex or gender, with "O" being an option in the requests.

Until recently, Wisconsin superintendents universally refused to provide overall GPA by sex. With the help of a Wisconsin attorney, we were able to force them to make GPAs available by sex. Today, gratefully, that exercise is routine for school superintendents and the University of Wisconsin compliance department. (14)

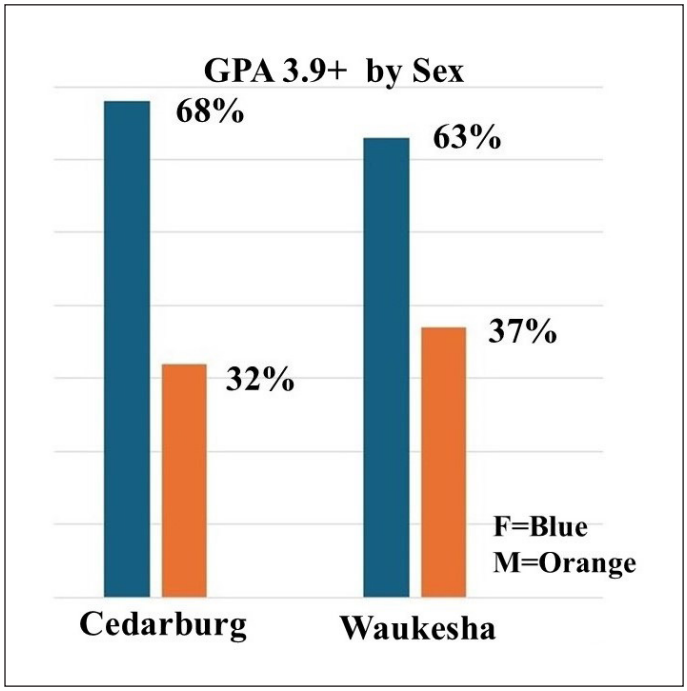


What the data shows is that every school district in Wisconsin reporting GPA by sex for high school students gives boys significantly worse grades than girls, (15) even though DPI statistics show that boys do just as well as girls on ACT exams demonstrating their learning and knowledge.

Just half of boys are given a 3.9 or higher GPA as compared to girls, again even though they learn and know just as much as shown in test scores. This holds true regardless of the test, with the authors confirming even for a single class the Wisconsin teacher reported boys scoring equal to the girls on tests.

For example, in the Waukesha and

Cedarburg school districts, located in communities where there is racial homogeneity, high average income, two parent families, proper fathering, and easy access to mentoring and other supports such as scouts, clubs and church for boys, boys still are given worse grades than girls.



As a result, 2 million smart boys- - boys who test at or above the level of current and graduated college students-- every year are denied access to a 4 year college education. (16) For Wisconsin, that is statistically around 10,000 lost college graduates every year.

5.<u>The reason why boys, young men and males are discriminated against in grading.</u>

The reason why males are given worse GPAs at all levels of education in Wisconsin, and nationwide, is that every school district grades based NOT on learning and knowledge but in part (large part) on behavior that is a) unrelated to learning and knowledge (17) and performance in the workplace,(18) and b) female gender based and thus discriminates against males.(19)

Every 4 year university also discriminates against males by a)using GPA as the primary criterion for admission, b)interestingly having a double standard for American males and males from India in admissions, and c) discriminating against males in grading at the university level (thus not enough males able to become attorneys).

6.<u>The solution, the only solution, and the sufficient and necessary solution, is to ban behavior from grading and university admissions in the state of Wisconsin.</u>

The solution is no-cost to anybody, not schools or universities, not teachers or faculty time, not disciplinary action when needed, not access for females (we need More female 4 year college graduates, not fewer), (20) and most of all no-cost to taxpayers.

Through state legislation or a court case, this can be accomplished quickly and will see results within six years for the state, rural attorneys in Wisconsin, and not coincidentally, economic prosperity for the state and rural Wisconsin. (21)

Proof the Solution Works

The solution works and Americans approve of it. The solution works in India, the main source of U.S. foreign STEM workers, and it works in other countries. The United States is dependent on the solution, and Americans implicitly accept and support it.

India has a high volume of male STEM students. (22) It also has gender parity in graduates, as should be the case here. (23) In India, institutions comparable to U.S. high schools and higher education do not include behavior in GPA. Admission to higher education is based solely on learning and knowledge as exemplified by exam scores. (24)

Wisconsin and the U.S. is dependent on the solution. Wisconsin's hospital system would break down without male surgeons from India. (25) Congress supports, and

companies want more, H-1B visa workers. Some 71% of the H-1B visa workers, 80% of which are male, come from India. (26) To try to replace the lack of our own sons with a 4 year degree, one U.S. company a week is setting up shop in India to recruit engineers, some 1,800 total so far. (27) The University of Wisconsin and others questionably have a double standard in admissions, requiring behavior-based GPAs from our young people while admitting students from India without requiring behavior measurements.

The Attorney Recruitment and Retention Committee's Recommendations Are Inadequate

The Court's appointed committee report was flawed in its process, incorrectly identified possible causes, provided inadequate insufficient and wrong recommendations, and ignored the cause and solution. Here are the Committee's four major areas and recommendations, and why each neither addresses the cause or the solution of the rural attorney shortage in Wisconsin.

1. Improve the availability of attorneys in high-need areas.

a. Create a financial incentive program to encourage more attorneys to live and work in high-need areas.

This will have no impact on solving the issue of legal deserts in Wisconsin. Female attorneys are now the majority of new and recent attorneys in the state. Females do not see money as one of their three top motivating factors, ranking much lower at priority seven. There are numerous examples of highly paid female attorneys accepting up to a 75% pay decrease in order to accept a job that is more centered on helping people and contributing to the public good.

Males, the other hand, have money as one of their top three top motivating factors. But if there are fewer male attorneys (and there are), that makes a financial incentive program both costly for taxpayers and ineffective for recruiting more attorneys to rural areas.

Of the pilot programs providing law school tuition reimbursement for living and practicing in a rural area, none have been documented to fill the rural attorney gap. The longest tracked pilot program, in South Dakota, yielded just 32 attorneys ten years after the first class, and even there male attorneys were a slight majority.

b. Seek an increase in the hourly rate for private attorneys who accept State Public Defender case appointments.

The State Public Defender availability, cited rightfully as a major concern in rural areas, is to our understanding a statewide hourly rate. That would make reimbursement actually relatively higher for attorneys in rural areas than in urban areas since the cost of living is much lower in rural areas. While this may be a good idea for other purposes, it would not generate any more rural attorneys.

2. Increase the overall supply of attorneys in Wisconsin.

a. Expand paths for legal training and education, including programs that focus on rural and northern areas of the state.

'Expanded paths' is not an issue. Smart young men in Wisconsin are being denied access to college and therefore law school. Any 'expanded path' would not be any more equal and not produce any more rural attorneys.

3. Increase access to legal services provided by non-attorney professionals.

a. Study the feasibility of establishing a limited license practitioner (LLP) program to provide legal services in specific, non-criminal practice areas.

If female attorneys are not currently drawn to rural areas, there is no reason that female LLPs would be attracted to rural areas.

4. Utilize existing legal resources as efficiently as possible.

a. Promote and expand the use of remote technology for certain routine, non-evidentiary court proceedings.

This is a good idea, but it has no impact on the core problem, which is not just about rural attorneys but also the overall need for more practicing attorneys in Wisconsin. It calls into question an urban attorney's knowledge of rural life and specialized rural applicable situations vis a vis the law (example: right of way on private roads).

Legal Specialties where Males Are Critical

None of the above Committee recommendations address the overall gender discrepancy in at least three subspecialties of the law, one of which is central to economic prosperity for all of Wisconsin in the 21st century of the Knowledge Society.

1. Patent & Intellectual Property Law (28)

Patent law exhibits one of the largest gender imbalances in the legal field. Patent & Intellectual Property law is arguably central to the economic prosperity of Wisconsin, where the growing specialization, niche fields and new inventions of intangible products are driving the knowledge society. Approximately 79% of patent attorneys are male.

Becoming a registered patent attorney requires a degree in a qualifying STEM field (such as engineering, computer science, or physics) to sit for the Patent Bar. The historically lower representation of women in certain STEM disciplines directly affects this field.

This circles around to the cause, and the solution. We need more male college graduates, and we must not grade on gender-based behavior that is both neurological and hormonal in origin, and is totally irrelevant to learning, knowledge, and future work readiness and productivity.

2. Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A) and Corporate Law (29)

Large-scale corporate transactions and cross-border M&A practices skew heavily male, particularly in senior and partner ranks. Male attorneys make up a substantial majority of lead M&A transactional partners.

The intense, round-the-clock deal cycles, unpredictability of closing schedules, and heavy emphasis on corporate business-development networks have historically contributed to lower retention of female attorneys in corporate practice groups.

3. Specialized Transactional Fields (Real Estate Finance, Fund Finance, & Construction)

Fields heavily tied to industries that are traditionally male-dominated—such as commercial construction, fund finance, and real estate investment—show similar demographic skews. We also suggest rural industries in Wisconsin fall into this category, both traditional rural industries like lumber and mining, as well as new emerging fields like water quality, Native American law, wild animal preservation, forest conservation and preservation and others.

Construction law, equipment finance, and commercial real estate finance feature higher-than-average male attorney participation.

Practice areas are closely aligned with male-skewed industries (such as commercial real estate development and private equity) often inherit the demographic characteristics of their primary client bases.

Conclusion

The cause for rural Wisconsin's lack of attorneys is a decline in young male attorneys. That decline, in turn, is caused by gender discrimination in Wisconsin secondary schools, colleges and universities, and in the Wisconsin Law School. It can be solved in Wisconsin simply and with no-cost to anybody, especially taxpayers.

The no-cost solution is to ban behavior in grading (GPA) and admission to higher education. It is the necessary, sufficient and only solution. Wisconsin secondary schools, colleges and universities and the Wisconsin Law School simply need to comply with Title IX, the law of the land, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

References

(1) According to the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), women officially crossed the majority threshold in 2023, making up over 50.3% of all law firm associates (who predominantly fall in the under-40 age bracket).
According to the State Bar of Wisconsin, within private practice law firms, women make up 49% of attorneys under the age of 40. Approximately 45% of all Wisconsin attorneys age 40 and under are women.
(2) Female attorneys are statistically more likely than their male counterparts to be part of a dual-career household or married to another professional. In small towns, finding a suitable job for a partner or spouse can be a major hurdle, often making relocation impractical. Structural support for working mothers and caregivers is often more accessible in urban environments, including childcare, professional and non-professional networks, mentorship, and specialized and diverse networks.
(3) The statistic referencing a sharp decline in male legal education stems from data regularly reported in the **American Bar Association (ABA) Profile of the Legal Profession** report. While total law school class sizes decreased across the board after peaking in 2010, the drop in overall male law student participation has been the most pronounced. According to ABA data, total male enrollment in ABA-accredited law schools dropped by over 28,000—from a peak of 78,516 in 2010 down to 50,096 in 2023. When examining individual graduating classes rather than total multi-year enrollment, the number of male J.D. graduates per year dropped by roughly 10,000 graduates per annual class comparing peak pre-2012 levels (~28,000–29,000 male graduates) to recent post-2020 graduating classes (~18,000–19,000 male graduates).
(4) Within six years of initial enrollment, roughly 28% of men are no longer enrolled anywhere without a degree, compared to 23% of women. Within 4 Years: Approximately 54% of women graduate with a 4 year degree on time compared to 43% of men—an 11 percentage point gender gap. Within 6 Years: 68% of women complete their degrees compared to 61% of men. Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Key Report: *Completing College: A National View of Student Completion Rates* (Six-Year Outcomes Cohort Series).
(5) At the conclusion of the spring 2026 semester, the University of Wisconsin Law School had a total of 636 JD students. There were 294 males with a combined cumulative grade point average of 3.33; and 342 females with a combined cumulative grade point average of

3.37, according to a July 28, 2026 response to the authors Open Records Request from Julie Laundrie, Public Records Custodian, Office of Compliance, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
(6)College enrollment totaled 19.28 million undergraduate students nationwide in Fall 2024, down *8.43%* from peak enrollment in 2010 (21.0 million).
(7) Title IX "prohibits sex-based discrimination in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance." https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/title-ix-and-sex-discrimination. So Title IX clearly applies to males as females being the subject of discrimination.
(8) College Enrollment & Student Demographic Statistics, by Melanie Hanson, Education Data Initiative. https://educationdata.org/college-enrollment-statistics
(9) Colleges are now closing at a pace of one a week, by Jon Marcus, Washington Post, 2024. https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2024/04/26/college-closures-student-impact/
In addition, for the first time, the Federal Reserve has created a model for predicting the number of colleges closing in the next year.
(10) National Center for Education Statistics. Degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1869-70 through 2025-26. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_318.10.asp
See also Higher Education Enrollment Trends by Gender, 1970 to 2025, March 20, 2019, Educational Policy Institute. https://educationalpolicy.org/hello-world/
The percentages of graduation rates by sex reported by NCES and all other sources, as far as the authors can tell, include international students. So the percentage of American males graduating from college is lower than that being reported, at least 2% lower.
(11) When Betty Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* in 1964, she cited that only 38% of college graduates were women. Society was rightly aghast. Her book initiated a national movement which resulted in Title IX being legislated in 1972. That led to a parity in graduates by sex in 1980. By 2025-26 male college graduates were estimated at, or only slightly above 38%, with males being 41.8% of four year graduates and 34.9% of two year associates degree graduates.
(12) https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/education/title-ix
(13) "Children Work, Why – The Children's Answer," Helen M. Todd, *McClure's Magazine*, April 1913. United States Congress, House Committee on the Judiciary, March 28, 1924. *Child Labor*, compiled by Julia E. Johnsen, HW Wilson Company, New York, 1924, page 145.
(14) "The school district does not provide that information to the public," the authors were repeatedly told by multiple superintendents over several years until they hired Tom Kamenick, Wisconsin Open Records Attorney in Port Washington. School districts then were forced to comply. In July 2026 our Open Records request to the Wisconsin Law School was turned around in a few weeks.
(15) "How Wisconsin Schools Shortchange Boys," by Julie Coates and William A. Draves, Learning Resources Network, 2023. A statistical analysis for validity was done by an independent source, who found that the variation in just one school district, La Crosse, had a 1 in 1,000 chance of being random.
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(16) Sources include the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC).
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(18) Bureau of Labor Statistics, https://www.bls.gov/cps/aa2021/cpsaat46.htm
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More Information is Available

"How Wisconsin Schools Shortchange Boys," by Julie Coates and William A. Draves, Learning Resources Network, 2023. https://boysinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/LERN-How-Wisconsin-Schools-Shortchange-Boys-FINAL.pdf
"A Suggested Solution to the Boys' STEM Crisis", by Julie Coates and William A. Draves, https://www.GenEq.org
Smart Boys, Bad Grades: Gender Inequality and STEM in Education, by Julie Coates and William A. Draves, LERN Books, 2015, 172 pages.

Authors' Qualifications

Julie Coates is a civil rights leader whom the KKK tried to kill several times. Attorney Starla Adams called her "one of the heroines." She headed a 300 female tutor effort in the Greensboro, NC, black community; created the first known Black Beauty Pageant in the United States; and worked in the mountains to recruit children to attend school.

In the 1980s she created a child care center and ran a community education program sponsored by Kansas State University, in Manhattan, Kansas.

More recently, she became the leading authority on learning styles, including generational learning styles, gender learning styles, and high functioning autistic and neurodivergent learning styles. She is Senior Vice President at the Learning Resources Network (LERN).

Ms. Coates has been interviewed by *The New York Times* and *BBC World Service Radio*,

among others. She has spoken at Radcliffe, throughout the United States and Canada, and in Mexico, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, and Russia.

Julie has mentored 20 boys and girls. Kriket dropped out of school in River Falls, Wisconsin at the age of 14, was homeless and a meth addict for 15 years, and had Julie get him into a university where he had straight A's in his final term. She diagnosed a learning disability for fifth grade student Ciera and worked with her mother for years. Ciera graduated Summa cum laude from Fayetteville State University in 2026.

William A. Draves served on the Wisconsin Committee on Children and Youth under Governor Warren Knowles, graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and began his career in education in Milwaukee.

He is President and has been CEO of the Learning Resources Network (LERN) for 50 years, the Board of Directors of which has had gender equity since its founding in 1974. He wrote draft legislation for the GI Bill of 1976 for the American Association of Community Colleges, state legislation for the Kansas Community Education Act, and an amicus curiae brief for a U.S. Supreme Court case.

Draves predicted the great recession (see *The New York Times*, January 6, 2006), predicted and then proved that Gen Y was driving less than previous generations (*The Atlantic*, *Kiplinger*, *Forbes*, etc. 2010) and with co-author Julie Coates predicted the rise of passenger train ridership, remote work, and online learning growth (*Nine Shift: Work, Life and education in the 21st Century*, 2023).

He has spoken on boys' and education around the state of Wisconsin to parents, teachers in CESA districts, and school superintendents, from Cumberland to Lambeau Field. Recently he has done research on family history, which includes Tillie Thorkelson at S.C. Johnson & Sons, the first woman on the board of directors for a major U.S. company (www.TillieT.com); and supported the research of Douglas Mintline on Johanna Brotch, the only female ship owner in Wisconsin (resulting in a Wisconsin Historical Marker in 2025), sister of his great grandfather and co-founder of Regal Rexnord, William A. Draves I.

About Gender Equity in Education

Gender Equity in Education (GenEq) is a state and national voluntary effort sponsored by two national organizations, the Gender Equity Network, and the Learning Resources Network (LERN).

For information is available at www.GenEq.org and Gender Equity in Education, P.O. Box 254, Presque Isle, Wisconsin 54557, Email: draves@lern.org.

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