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State Representative Suzanne Ness

Ness, COWL Highlight Scholarship For Women Seeking Higher Education

EAST DUNDEE, Ill. – As co-chair of the Conference of Women Legislators (COWL) of the Illinois General Assembly, state Rep. Suzanne Ness, D-East Dundee, is encouraging women over the age of 25 to apply for COWL's 2026 W.I.S.E. Scholarship, a one-year undergraduate scholarship that seeks to support women who have not had the opportunity to begin or complete their education.

"We're quickly approaching another school season where students nationwide are heading back to school. For many people across the country though, especially women, higher education like colleges and universities are simply out of reach, whether it's the exorbitant cost or responsibilities like childcare," said Ness. "COWL recognizes this as an important opportunity to support women over the age of 25, who were never able to or didn't have the opportunity to complete their education. This scholarship seeks to give women back that chance by providing dollars for tuition, books and other fees, including summer school."

The 2026 W.I.S.E. Scholarship application is now live and available for Illinois women planning to attend an accredited school in Illinois, are over 25 years of age and did not have the opportunity to complete their education. Those interested in applying can do so at cowlil.com/scholarship-application. Applications must be submitted by midnight on Sept. 5, 2026. Approximately 10 women will receive up to \$2,500 for the 2026-2027 academic year.

COWL's scholarship announcement follows Rep. Ness' recent appointment as an At-Large member to the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) Women's Legislative Network Executive Board. COWL and the board held a successful fundraising reception at this year's NCSL conference in Chicago that brought together over 200 women leaders, legislators and advocates to support the next generation of women in public service.

"This scholarship can be life changing. I encourage women who want to continue or finish their education here in Illinois to take advantage of this amazing opportunity," said Ness.

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