



# Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## REMARKS OF REPRESENTATIVE JEFF MURSAU, CHAIR, JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS, TO THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

February 10, 2022

Good morning, members of the Committee on Education. During this past interim session, I again served as the chairperson of the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations. I am here today to present one bill from the special committee's work for your consideration.

The special committee is required to be created every biennium to study issues relating to American Indian tribes and bands in this state and to develop legislative proposals. Membership of the study committee consisted of three Senators, three Representatives, and 10 public members representing the interests of the state's tribes. The study committee met three times from October 2020 to January 2021.

The committee discussed numerous policy options spanning an array of substantive areas of law. In concluding its work, the committee recommended a number of bill drafts for introduction by the Joint Legislative Council, including Assembly Bill 428, which is before the committee today.

The bill updates the membership of the Higher Educational Aids Board. The Board is a part-time independent policy-making board that administers a number of state student aid programs. The Board's current voting membership represents certain interests, including public institutions of higher education, private, nonprofit institutions of higher education, and the general public.

However, because no tribal colleges existed when the Board was originally created by statute, tribal colleges are not represented on the Board. The original bill called for adding three members to the Board to represent the state's tribal colleges, but we have brought forward an amendment that instead provides for one new seat on the Board, with each of the state's two tribal colleges alternating appointees each term.

I am happy to answer any questions. Steve McCarthy from Legislative Council is here with me today to also help answer any questions. Thank you for considering this bill and hearing my comments today.