
Wisconsin Legislative Council

AMENDMENT MEMO



Memo published: November 9, 2023

Contact: Emily Hicks, Staff Attorney

2023 Assembly Bill 554

**Assembly
Amendment 1**

2023 ASSEMBLY BILL 554

Under current law, the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB), University of Wisconsin System (UWS), and Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) oversee several grant and loan programs for minority students. Current law also requires the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and the Marquette University School of Dentistry (MUSD) to each make every effort to ensure that at least five percent of their total enrollments consist of minority students as a condition of certain state assistance.

2023 Assembly Bill 554 modifies these programs so that, rather than apply to minority students, they instead apply to disadvantaged students. The bill does not define the term “disadvantaged” but does provide that in determining whether a student is disadvantaged, the student’s race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or religion may not be considered either directly or indirectly.

Specifically, the bill makes this modification to the following programs and requirements:

- The Minority Teacher Loan program administered by HEAB.
- The minority undergraduate grants administered by HEAB.
- Minority and disadvantaged student programs at UWS.
- The Lawton Grants program administered by the UWS Board of Regents.
- The minority student participation and retention plan required of the WTCS Board.
- Minority student participation and retention grants awarded by the WTCS Board.
- The incentive grants awarded by the WTCS Board.

The bill also repeals the minority enrollment requirements for MCW and MUSD.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 1

Assembly Amendment 1 to 2023 Assembly Bill 554 clarifies the meaning of the term “disadvantaged.” Specifically, under the amendment, a student is disadvantaged if that student has experienced any unfavorable economic, familial, geographic, physical, or other personal hardship. The amendment permits HEAB, UWS, and WTCS to further define the term “disadvantaged” for the purposes of each program modified by the bill. However, similar to the bill, in defining the term disadvantaged, HEAB, UWS, and WTCS may not consider any of the following: a student’s race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or religion, or a student’s identity as a member of a group without regard to individual qualities.

BILL HISTORY

Representatives Rettinger and Wittke offered Assembly Amendment 1 on November 2, 2023. On November 7, 2023, the Assembly adopted Assembly Amendment 1 by voice vote. The Assembly then passed the bill, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 62; Noes, 35.

For a full history of the bill, visit the Legislature's [bill history page](#).

EH:kp;jal