



# 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 STATE AFFAIRS

December 20, 2023

Good morning, members of the Assembly Committee on State Affairs. 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 committee's work for your consideration.

The committee is required to be created every biennium to study issues relating to American Indian tribes and to develop legislative proposals. Membership of the study committee consisted of two Senators, five Representatives, and 10 public members representing the interests of the state's tribes. The study committee met four times from August to December 2022.

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, one of which is before this committee today.

**Assembly Bill 211** simply adds tribal governments and their employees to the list of persons who are authorized to copy a certified copy of a vital record for administrative use by the authorized entity.

The special committee recommended introduction of the bill by a unanimous vote.

I am happy to answer any questions. Steve McCarthy and Ben Kranner from Legislative Council are here with me today to help answer any questions. Thank you for considering this bill.



Oneida Nation  
Oneida Business Committee  
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To: Representative Rob Swearingen, Chair  
Members of the Assembly Committee on State Affairs

From: Lisa Liggins, Oneida Nation Secretary

Date: Wednesday, December 20, 2023

**Re: Support of Vital Records Authorization Recommended by the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations: Assembly Bill 211**

Shekoli, Chairman Swearingen and members of the Assembly Committee on State Affairs.

My name is Lisa Liggins, and I am serving my second term on the Oneida Business Committee as the Oneida Nation's Secretary. I also served on the State of Wisconsin Joint Legislative Council Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations. Further, I was previously employed at the Oneida Nation Enrollment Trust Office, so I understand the importance of the legislation before the Committee today.

I would first like to thank Chairman Swearingen for scheduling a public hearing on the vital records bill recommended by the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations. I would also like to thank Representative Jeff Mursau, who chaired the Special Committee and the other legislators that served: Rep. Edming, Rep. Rozar, Rep. Tittl and Rep. Vining, former Rep. Bowen, Sen. Jacque and former Sen. Janet Bewley.

Assembly Bill 211 is meant to be a simple change to incorporate an authorization for federally recognized tribal governments who are authorized to copy a certified copy of a vital record for administrative use. In our case, the vital records of tribal members and applicants.

Each tribal government has the right to self-determine enrollment criteria and administer their enrollment process. As with other Tribes, the Oneida Nation Trust Enrollment Office verifies that tribal members and applicants for tribal membership meet the qualifications as established by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Oneida Nation and the Membership Ordinance.

The Oneida Nation has over 17,000 tribal citizens worldwide.

Readily accessing certain copies of vital records can easily resolve potential questions of enrollment status. The Oneida Nation believes passage of Assembly Bill 211 will improve our services. Tribal planning and grant requests are often correlated with enrollment numbers. Accuracy protects the integrity of these administrative processes.

Again, Assembly Bill 211 is meant to be a simple change to incorporate an authorization for federally recognized tribal governments to obtain, copy, and retain vital records of tribal members and applicants.

This legislative proposal was identified as a priority by the eleven federally recognized Tribes located in Wisconsin, as evidenced through the work of the Legislative Council Special Committee on State and Tribal Relations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I am available to answer any questions you may have.

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