



Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS Assembly Bill 98 and 99

March 5, 2025

Good morning, members of the Assembly Committee on State Affairs. During this past interim, I again served as the chairperson of the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations.

The State-Tribal Relations committee is a permanent committee created to study issues relating to American Indian tribes and to develop legislative proposals. Membership of the study committee consisted of two Senators, four Representatives, and 11 public members representing the interests of the state's tribes. The study committee met four times from August to December 2024.

The committee discussed numerous topics of importance to the state's tribes. In concluding its work, the committee recommended a number of bill drafts for introduction by the Joint Legislative Council, two of which are before this committee today.

Assembly Bill 98 provides that school boards and charter schools may not prohibit a pupil with certain tribal affiliation from wearing traditional tribal regalia at a graduation ceremony or school-sponsored event.

Assembly Bill 99 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.

Both of these bills passed the Assembly last session on voice votes, and the State-Tribal Relations committee recommended introduction of both bills by a unanimous vote again this session.

Steve McCarthy and Abby Gorzlaneyk from Legislative Council are here with me today to help answer any questions. Thank you for considering these bills.



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

From: Lisa Liggins, Oneida Nation Secretary

Date: March 5, 2025

Re: Support for Vital Records Bill Recommended by the Special Committee
on State-Tribal Relations

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

My name is Lisa Liggins, 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 Trust Enrollment office so I understand the importance of security with regard to Tribal vital records.

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: Senators Felzkowski and Smith and Representatives Conley, Edming, and Rozar.

It is important for Tribal Nations to keep and maintain copies of vital records. Each tribe has the right to self-determine enrollment criteria and administer their enrollment process. The Oneida Nation has had deal with the experience of individuals attempting to fraudulently enroll for personal/financial gain when they would otherwise be ineligible. By keeping copies of vital records on hand, we are able to confirm that the records were not fraudulently modified. In the event a member's enrollment status is in question, readily accessing certain vital records can easily resolve outstanding questions or issues.

The Oneida Nation's Trust Enrollment Department requires an original document to be on file because we are not authorized to make photocopies. As a result, applicants bear an additional cost since they do not receive their original copy back. While ordering an extra copy at the same time is a relatively small expense, it is still an added financial burden.

To ensure parity with other governmental offices that have the authority to make copies, we advocate for the ability to do the same. This would align our processes with standard practices across government agencies, reducing unnecessary costs for applicants and improving service efficiency.

A good mind. A good heart. A strong fire.

We currently serve over 17,000 tribal citizen globally and nearly all with multiple service points. That include:

- i. Adult members claiming general welfare assistance (GWA) payments
- ii. Address Updates
- iii. Direct Deposit Updates
- iv. Life Insurance beneficiary updates
- v. General Tribal Council attendance payments
- vi. Tribal ID
- vii. Minor members claiming Minor Trust funds.
- viii. Payment of Life Insurance Claims
- ix. Enrollment of new members
- x. Cross department verification of enrollment within Oneida Nation administration.
- xi. Investment of Minor Trust funds with annual contribution
- xii. Quarterly reports of Minor Trust Fund performance

Please understand, this legislative bill 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. It is with a good mind, a good heart, and strong fire I say yawako for your time and consideration.