

Dear Representative Mursau:

I received my notice of appointment to serve on the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations Committee. I was in the hospital with pneumonia and am slowly recuperating and catching up on my correspondence. The letter stated that I should contact your office to express my wishes on topics for review or discussion. I have spoken with several members of Council to solicit their input but have not been able to speak to all members. I will relay more information as it is given to me.

Some items listed for discussion are:

1. Tribally controlled Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa K-12 School - Funding is received by a formula grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs for all Tribal members in attendance but not at the level given to students enrolled in the public school system. No funds are received for students who do not qualify but we are still educating those students. I believe this issue was raised in 2005 but was not acted upon. Other schools in the State with similar financial burdens are the Oneida Tribe, Menominee Tribe, and Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe.
2. Lac Courte Oreilles Tribally Controlled Community College – The same scenario exists at our Community College. We receive funding for enrolled members of Federally recognized Tribes on a formula basis from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. We have outreach sites on the St. Croix Reservation, Bad River Reservation, Red Cliff Reservation, and the Lac du Flambeau Reservation. We do not receive adequate funding for our students as compared to the UW system but more importantly, we do not receive any funds for our non member students who comprise between 25 to 30 percent of our student body. We need to research how we can receive State dollars for those students. The other Tribally controlled Community College, College of the Menominee Nation, I'm sure has similar data and budget constraints.
3. Codification of the Indian Child Welfare Act – This is currently being developed by a workgroup within the Department of Children and Families and maybe presented during the next session. I'm not sure how this Committee can assist but it is seen by the Tribes in Wisconsin as a much needed and long awaited revision.
4. Wisconsin Indian Grant (WIG) – With the budget cuts that occurred within the State about ten years ago, this grant awarded to post secondary students was cut in half from \$2,200.00 per year to \$1,100.00 per year. When other cuts were restored this was not. In later years, this was moved from the Higher Educational Aids Board to the gaming budget. Since then, the total amount budgeted has not adequately increased as the number of eligible students has increased within our institutions of higher learning. There is a need to increase the award amount given to students along with a line increase to the budget.
5. Wisconsin Higher Education Grant (WHEG) – The students at both Tribally Controlled Community Colleges within the State are eligible to receive this grant from the Higher Educational Aids Board. This was also moved to the gaming budget and since that time has only received slight increases in total line item amounts but our total eligible student population has increased. There is a need to increase the State line item amount in this category or move it back to the State budget so increases can occur as the need within the entire State student population increases.

Thank you for the appointment to the State-Tribal Relations committee and I look forward to working you on issues most vital to our communities.

Agnes Fleming,
Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board Councilmember