



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Assembly Republican Veterans Speak Out Against Gov. Evers' Budget Proposal

Madison... Assembly Republican veterans are speaking out against a proposal in Governor Tony Evers' budget that would reduce tuition for non U.S. citizens. Under the Evers proposal, college applicants in the country illegally would pay substantially reduced in-state tuition if they've attended a Wisconsin high school and been "present" in the state for three years. In contrast, veterans in the state must prove not only residency of five years, but prove military service and maintain their grades in order to receive tuition benefits.

"This is a stunning display of the displaced priorities Governor Evers used to develop his budget," said Rep. Ken Skowronski (R-Franklin). "Veterans who have served our nation are forced to meet a much higher standard to get the tuition remission they earned through sacrifice than the governor asks from illegal immigrants."

The Republican representatives are asking the members of the Joint Committee on Finance to remove the item from the budget. The tuition break for each illegal immigrant could run tens of thousands of dollars, much more than what veterans receive in the tuition remission program.

"Governor Evers's proposal shows how out of touch he is with Wisconsin's veterans," said Rep. Jim Ott (R-Mequon). "Of course, it should be taken out of the budget."

"Governor Evers has misplaced priorities if he thinks it's acceptable that undocumented immigrants should have an easier path to in-state tuition than our veterans," said Rep. Jesse James (R-Altoona). "It's frankly quite disgusting and a disservice to those that have served and defended this country's freedoms, freedoms that make it possible for the Wisconsin Idea to exist. I urge the Joint Finance Committee to remove this from the budget."

Under state statute, the Wisconsin veteran remission program requires veterans to prove Wisconsin residency at time of entry into service or for five consecutive years as well as proving qualifying service and maintaining a C average. Some veterans who serve Wisconsin still would not meet the residency standard and would be ineligible for the tuition program.

"The Evers plan says three years for illegal immigrants to get special tuition benefits, but five years for veterans," said Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc). "We are talking about people who fought for our freedom and deserve our respect and gratitude."

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