



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 21, 2019

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Murphy UW Research Bill Signed Into Law

MADISON, WI — Today, a bill to speed up the review of contracts with outside organizations involving research at University of Wisconsin System institutions authored by State Representative Dave Murphy (R – Greenville) was signed into law by the governor.

The bipartisan bill was inspired by the late UW–Madison Professor Mark Cook, who advocated for this change to keep more spin-off research in Wisconsin. Prior Wisconsin law required a 45 day passive review period before a contract was approved. Research contracts will still be subject to approval by the Board of Regents, or designated administrators, and each institution is required to have a detailed management plan to prevent conflicts of interest in the approval of such contracts. Rep. Murphy commented on the new process that will be used to review contracts, stating, “Managing conflicts of interest is something best done on the ground by people who are familiar with the individuals involved and engaged in the work being done.”

Current law generally prohibits state employees from participating in state contracts where they have a private financial interest and the ability to influence that contract. The law has a specific exemption for university employees when such contracts are between a UW System entity and a research company. This exemption allows UW faculty and research-focused employees who spin-off companies to engage in activity that benefits the interests of the public, the university, and the newly created business.

The 45 day passive review delay for contract approval was unique to Wisconsin. Murphy noted, “These delays don’t occur elsewhere and drive research opportunities out of the state.” In 2015 alone, UW–Madison saw nearly \$100 million less in private and non-profit research funding than other comparable universities around the country.

Murphy reflected on the importance of this new law, saying “Anyone who has started a business understands just how important it is to act quickly, especially when patents are involved. Our bill improves Wisconsin’s ability to compete for private and non-profit research funding. I’m proud that this bill will address an out of date law and advance modern research entrepreneurship in Wisconsin.”

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