



Tony Evers

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 20, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Senate:

I am vetoing SB 498 in its entirety.

This bill states that a technical college board or University of Wisconsin System institution would be required to adhere to several purported principles of “academic freedom” and expression. A board or institution that violates these provisions of the bill must provide a notification of such violation on all notices regarding admission to the college or institution, and the bill creates a cause of action for violations of these provisions.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to the Wisconsin State Legislature’s ongoing efforts to undermine the University of Wisconsin System and the Board of Regents by inserting itself into the daily decision making on University of Wisconsin campuses.

Moreover, I am also vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to the potential for this bill to suppress and deter free speech for students, faculty, and staff on higher education campuses. First of all, having personally served on the Board of Regents as State Superintendent of Public Instruction and having visited most if not all University of Wisconsin System and Wisconsin Technical Colleges System campuses, respectively, during my time as governor, I am happy to report to members of the Wisconsin State Legislature that the First Amendment and freedom of speech remain alive, well, and thriving on Wisconsin college campuses.

Students, faculty, and staff across university and technical college campuses in Wisconsin continue to discuss diverse ideas and perspectives, engage in thoughtful and difficult discussions with each other, grapple with complex issues and challenges, navigate conversations with people who have different experiences and backgrounds, and hear from other students, as well as faculty and staff, who have viewpoints from across the political spectrum.

I have no doubt this will continue to be the case on our campuses—as it should—so long as Republican lawmakers remain unable to inflict their radical and purely ideological agenda on higher education institutions across Wisconsin through legislative efforts like this.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers
Governor