



Tony Evers

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 9, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

While I am enacting Assembly Bill 601 today, I also want to be clear about the concerns I have about the important work that lies ahead of us.

This bill means a broader collection of Tribal Nations in Wisconsin could reap the benefits of increased gaming revenues. Statewide mobile events or sports wagering could present an opportunity to help level the playing field to ensure every Tribal Nation in Wisconsin can benefit from the increased revenues. This is important. When each of the Tribal Nations in Wisconsin thrive our surrounding communities and our state as a whole thrive, too. This bill also represents an opportunity for revenue paid into the state to support mental health programs and to combat the opioid crisis, two issues that I know plague both Tribal Nations and communities across our state.

I am signing Act 247 because my obligation as governor is always to respect the sovereignty of Tribal Nations in Wisconsin. Shortly after taking office in 2019, one of my first acts as governor was signing Executive Order #18 to reaffirm my commitment to respecting each Tribe's sovereign authority over its people and its territory. I promised I would always meaningfully consult Tribal leaders and governments on matters directly impacting each respective Nation. To me, keeping that promise has been the most important part of this process—to ensure the state of Wisconsin is not making decisions for and about 11 Tribal Nations without all 11 Tribal Nations.

I have heard from each of the 11 affected Tribes that this bill offers an opportunity for their governments and for their people to improve the quality of life, health, and stability of their communities. As governor, I am responsible for ensuring the state of Wisconsin upholds Tribal treaty rights and appropriately respects Tribal sovereignty in Wisconsin. Most importantly, this means respecting every Tribal Nation's right to do what is best for its people. I do so today as I always promised I would, but I am not without reservations about signing this bill.

This legislation is the beginning of a conversation, not the end of one. The real work begins today. Each of the 11 Tribes must now work diligently—and *together*—to shape the future of sports betting in Wisconsin. What I will not accept is a plan that fractures this opportunity into unequal pieces, allowing some Tribes to reap great benefits while leaving only crumbs for others. An approach that exacerbates long-standing inequalities among Tribal Nations is not good for Wisconsinites or Wisconsin. I will not entertain it as governor.

The Tribal Nations have recently begun these discussions in earnest, and I am pleased to see more equitable models for sharing the risks and rewards of mobile gaming emerging. Moving forward, it is my expectation that each Tribal Nation have the opportunity to provide meaningful feedback and input as this process continues. I further ask that any model that puts a few Tribes on top and forces



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the remaining Tribes to accept a small share be rejected in favor of a model that can serve as a tool for self-determination for every Wisconsin Tribal Nation, regardless of its size, wealth, or geographic location. A joint venture—with each Tribe contributing, and each Tribe benefiting in equal shares—is gaining traction in these discussions, and I strongly support pursuing this or a similar model.

This is an opportunity to avoid the mistakes of past compact amendments that left some Tribes and their members in poverty while only lifting up a few. It is further my expectation that we look beyond mere dollar signs and economics and insist these decisions also be guided by respect, humility, compassion, and solidarity.

I share the same goal as many of the Tribal Nations—to develop and embrace a model that each Tribal Nation can participate in with dignity and pride. I will do everything in my power to support models that address disparities rather than exacerbate them and reject models that leave some Nations with little more than they have now while others prosper and thrive.

Wisconsin cannot afford to continue to leave any Tribal Nation behind.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tony Evers'.

Tony Evers
Governor