



DAVE MURPHY

State Representative • 56th Assembly District

Senate Committee on Economic and Workforce Development

March 24, 2021

SB 157: Tools of the Trade

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for Senate Bill 157, our 'Tools of the Trade' bill. I am the Assembly author of this bill, which Senator Jacque and I also introduced last session.

Students at our technical and tribal colleges are critical to our growing workforce in Wisconsin. As a long-time proponent of training, education and experience, I'm proud to re-introduce this important bill. Our bill expands the Tools of the Trade apprenticeship program already in place in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

The Tools of the Trade program was established in 2013, and has been privately funded by the Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation. Sadly, there is still an unmet need with these grants. Every year, applicants are not awarded the grant because the money has run out. This legislation will help WTCS and tribal college students meet the demands of our workforce needs by awarding up to \$1500 grants to qualified students for use in paying for apprenticeship needs such as tools or special clothing and equipment. Job training for the trades requires students to have their own professional level supplies and equipment, and this is a great way to get those items in their hands fast.

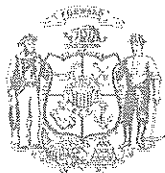
Wisconsin's tribal governments requested \$21,000 annually in gaming revenue for the Tools of the Trade program grants at tribal colleges, and this bill includes that allocation.

Providing a state investment of an additional \$100,000 per academic year to this critical and already successful program is a small way to have a great impact on our students and our workforce of the future.

Again, thank you for hearing this bill. I hope you'll join me in supporting Senate Bill 157.

Thank you.

Rep. Dave Murphy
56th Assembly District



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Testimony before the Senate Committee on Economic and Workforce Development

State Senator André Jacque

March 24th, 2021

Chairman Feyen and Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today as the author of Senate Bill 157, strong bi-partisan legislation Rep. Murphy and I have re-introduced to expand the Tools of the Trade apprenticeship grant program within the Wisconsin Technical College System.

Wisconsin employers desperately need skilled workers. Apprenticeships have been successful in helping meet the demand, but the road to complete them is long and paved with financial challenges that can discourage even the most motivated individuals. SB 157 will provide critical support to student apprentices.

As 2019 SB 44, this legislation unanimously passed the State Senate 33-0 last session, and passed the State Assembly by a 95-0 vote the session prior to that, and would expand the Tools of the Trade apprenticeship grant program by providing the Wisconsin Technical College System Board with an additional \$100,000 per academic year to assist technical college students who have undertaken apprenticeship training courses in conjunction with instruction at their schools. 2019 SB 44 was specifically included within Wisconsin's 2020 Governor's Council on Workforce Investment Recommendations.

Under the bill, each individual student who qualifies is eligible to receive up to \$1,500, which must be used to assist in paying for materials and expenses associated with the apprenticeship training program, including tools, clothing, equipment, and supplies. At the request of Wisconsin's tribal governments, the bill also allocates \$21,000 annually in tribal gaming revenue for apprenticeship Tools of the Trade grants at our state's tribal colleges.

The Technical College System Board is required to establish an application process and criteria for awarding grants. The existing Tools of the Trade program is privately funded for the system by the Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation and dispenses \$200,000 annually in grants, which is expected to continue at that level. The WTCS Board and WTCS districts plan to absorb the minor costs incurred related to the development of the application process, marketing of the scholarship to eligible students, evaluation of the applications, and selection of the recipients.

Since the Tools of the Trade program was established in 2013, approximately 96 percent of past recipients have either completed their apprenticeships or continued their training the following semester, a truly exceptional success rate among technical college financial aid programs. Completion is critical, as the most recent data available showed the median salary for students completing an apprenticeship to be over \$67,000. Nearly \$1.5 Million in Tools of the Trade scholarships have been awarded to apprentices in Wisconsin since the program was expanded to apprentices at all WTCS colleges seven years ago.

This legislation was drafted with input and support from the Wisconsin Technical College System and formally supported by the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association, along with numerous industry and trade organizations. Through expansion of the Tools of the Trade Apprenticeship Program, WTCS will better keep pace with the growing demand systemwide for assistance to apprentices, as well as provide opportunities for apprenticeship programs being started at Wisconsin's tribal colleges.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 157.