



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Murphy Statement on College Freedom of Expression Executive Order

WASHINGTON — Today, State Representative Dave Murphy (R–Greenville) joined President Trump at the White House for the signing of an executive order relating to improving free inquiry, transparency, and accountability on college campuses. The executive order requires colleges receiving federal research grants to uphold freedom of expression, directs the Department of Education to publish program level data on graduate earnings and student debt on the College Scorecard, and directs the department to submit policy recommendations on risk-sharing proposals for colleges whose students are eligible for federal student loans.

State Representative Dave Murphy (R–Greenville), chair of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities, issued the following statement:

“The executive order signed by the president today is a critical step in addressing significant and growing problems with higher education in Wisconsin and across the country. Our universities have become places where free expression is limited to free speech zones, in a nation built on the idea of being a free speech zone from sea to shining sea. Right here in the Fox Valley we have seen firsthand how colleges are curtailing the first amendment rights of pro-life students like Northeast Wisconsin Technical College student Polly Olsen, who spoke at the White House today, and is suing the campus to allow her to hand out religious themed Valentines in public spaces.

“We cannot claim to educate the minds of students when we restrict their ability to speak and hear an array of opinions. Colleges are supposed to be beacons of truth where issues can be brought forward and debated without restriction. Unfortunately, students and faculty members all too often discover that when an idea is inconvenient, unpopular, or politically conservative it is either banished by campus administrators or silenced by student enforcers of political correctness. No one on campus should face academic retribution, intimidation, vandalism, theft, or threats of violence simply because of their views. The president’s executive order sends a strong and necessary signal that silencing speech will no longer be acceptable at our universities.

“The president’s executive order will shine a spotlight on graduate earnings and student debt within specific academic programs, ensuring that prospective students will be able to make informed decisions about their future before investing tens of thousands of dollars in their college education. This critical information will help steer students and colleges in the right direction.

“I look forward to the recommendations that the Department of Education will prepare on colleges sharing the risk that student loan borrowers endure when they put their faith in the value of a college degree. It’s well past time that colleges get some skin in the game, instead of benefitting without risk from the trillions of dollars that students and taxpayers have invested.”

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