

Assembly declares April to be “Freedom of Expression Month.”

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The Assembly passed by voice vote a joint resolution declaring April to be “Freedom of Expression Month” across the state.

The resolution decries “speech codes, cancel culture, and corporate technology giants who censor the primary outlets for most Americans to express themselves.”

Bill author Rep. Dave Murphy, R-Greenville, warned censorship in the country “is at epidemic proportions,” especially on campuses and social media.

He said parents he has talked with said they’re worried about their children getting a “devalued” education at universities because of perceived censorship of conservative thinking.

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“Who gets to decide what truth is?” he asked. “The University of Wisconsin trumpets the sifting and winnowing of ideas to find the truth. But the whole idea of truth is very difficult to define.”

Gov. Tony Evers previously rejected both a bill and a UW System Board of Regents rule that would’ve established mandatory punishments for college students found guilty of disrupting the free expression of others. Opponents at the time warned the bill would’ve had the opposite effect, chilling free speech on campuses instead of promoting it.

Meanwhile, Rep. LaKeshia Myers, D-Milwaukee, on the floor said if her Republican colleagues really cared about free speech, they shouldn’t shut down Dem lawmakers from voicing their opinions on the floor during debate.

She said true support for freedom of expression should first start in the chamber, noting how the chamber still hasn't passed a Black History Month resolution this year.

"If we're talking about free speech ... then we need to honor speech and honor differences," she said. "That also includes people that you may not always agree with."

The joint resolution now goes to the Senate for consideration.