



Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
2025 Assembly Bill 673

Banning the use of genetic software from foreign adversaries in medical and research facilities

January 6, 2026

Chair Spiros and Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today for information only on Assembly Bill 673 related to banning the use of genetic software from foreign adversaries in medical and research facilities.

The University of Wisconsin – Madison takes seriously its responsibility and obligations to protect the genetic data in its possession. The institution shares the goals of the authors to mitigate as much as possible the risks of working with sensitive, valuable medical information and recognizes the importance of this issue.

UW-Madison is a healthcare research powerhouse. Madison recently climbed to 5th in the nation for university research expenditures, spending \$1.9 billion last year. Nearly half of this funding comes from federal awards, such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

This research has led to key medical and scientific breakthroughs on campus. Scientists at Madison recently developed the first 3D-printed brain tissue, seen as an important step towards treating a broad range of neurological disorders like Alzheimer's or Parkinson's diseases. Other major projects include developing individualized cell therapies, innovative breast cancer treatments, and emerging bio health practices.

Assembly Bill 673 poses several logistical and operational challenges for the university. The procurement of many existing genetic sequencers and associated software was done years ago and often through resellers, making the tracking of parts back to specific countries nearly impossible.

Furthermore, the systems needed to track the residency status of the human genome sequencing data would require significant budgetary and staff commitments UW-Madison currently does not have the capacity to fulfill. For example, the residency status of the patient and their information

would be difficult to follow over time. What if a patient leaves Wisconsin? What if a patient moves to Wisconsin? These everchanging factors would require a large administrative presence.

Finally, the U.S. Department of Justice created a federal bulk data rule to address similar concerns regarding the security of valuable American health information. Noticeably, the federal rule includes exceptions for both federally funded research and clinical trials from its requirements unless certain thresholds are met. Including the same carve outs in AB 673 would ease the enforcement of the bill if it were to become law.

For the reasons listed above, UW-Madison requests an extended implementation period to allow the institution to make the necessary changes to comply with any new regulations under this bill. These changes would include amending Madison's data sharing and security protocols, move existing genomic data into compliant environments, create a phased replacement of legacy equipment and software, and develop new procurement and security procedures for future purchases aligned with the guidelines in the legislation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the impact of Assembly Bill 673 on UW-Madison. If you have questions, please reach out to Crystal Potts or Mitch Goettl (crystal.potts@wisc.edu; goettl@wisc.edu).