



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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‘WISCONSIN WINS’ JOBS PROGRAM MOVES FORWARD

Jobs Plan Will Retrain Workers, Combat UI Fund Insolvency

Madison— Today State Representative Mark Honadel (R—South Milwaukee) and State Senator Van Wanggaard (R—Racine) introduced legislation that will help match unemployed job seekers with the needs of employers to acquire the skills necessary to begin work. The training program, called “Wisconsin Wins,” works by giving both job seekers and employers a tryout period.

“We must be open to innovative solutions to get people back to work,” Honadel said. “This legislation will insert job seekers directly into the workplace to get the skills they need to acquire full time jobs.”

Under the bill, unemployment claimants would be given the opportunity to take part-time training jobs with interested employers, with the possibility that it will lead to permanent employment. The claimants would continue to receive regular unemployment benefits with an additional stipend while participating in the voluntary program.

“The way to rebound our state economy is to jump-start private-sector hiring,” Wanggaard said. “The Wisconsin Wins plan does just that by providing incentives for both job seekers and job creators.”

The program alleviates some of the uncertainty involved in the hiring process. Employers could increase the probability of a good hire through the trial period, while reducing the usual risks and costs of hiring new employees. Job seekers would benefit by getting an opportunity to show potential employers the skills they possess and turn their training into full-time employment.

Wanggaard said the unique training in the program offers a new tool to displaced workers who need to change careers or acquire new specific skills, as well as showing employers which job applicants are eager to learn new skills.

Honadel said the Wisconsin Wins program will also generate savings for the state’s unemployment trust fund, which is currently running a deficit and borrowing money from the federal government.

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“I see Wisconsin Wins as a win-win,” Honadel said. “With the insolvency crisis in the state’s unemployment fund, this may be one way to decrease the large number of claimants and reduce their duration. Most importantly, it could open the door to new jobs people so desperately need.”

Joined by their colleagues Representative Mike Kuglitsch (R—New Berlin), Representative Kevin Petersen (R—Waupaca), and Senator Pam Galloway (R—Wausau), the legislators today released the plan that will begin as a pilot program by offering some UI claimants part-time training opportunities with employers for up to six weeks.

The proposal is modeled after successful, similar unemployment programs in Georgia and New Hampshire. In those states, the programs have received bipartisan support and positive feedback from both job seekers and employers, as well as saving millions in unemployment insurance funds.

Earlier this year, Honadel presented the concept to the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council, which is made up of employer and employee representatives. The Council stated that such a program would be useful in moving our unemployed workers back into the work force while providing them new skills.

The bill will be formally introduced in both houses of the legislature after allowing time for other legislators to review the bill and sign-on as co-sponsors of the legislation.

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