



STRONGER WORKFORCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 18, 2021

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Legislators Introduce *Stronger Workforce* Initiative

Madison, WI. – Today, Republican Legislators introduced the Stronger Workforce Initiative, a multipronged approach to address the employment crisis facing small businesses throughout Wisconsin.

“Everyone has seen the enormous amount of ‘help wanted’ signs throughout Wisconsin. Employers are desperate to fill vacant jobs, and the lack of willing workers has reached crisis levels. There’s an abundance of high-wage jobs and a large number of workers available. The Stronger Workforce Initiative will help remove the government-created barriers between the two.

“Republicans feel an obligation to deliver smarter government programs that provide a safety net to the truly needy but don’t compete with businesses needing to hire those who are able to work. It is clear that the opportunities for Wisconsin’s workforce have changed, and our government systems need to change along with them.”

The Stronger Workforce Initiative has sponsors in both the Senate and the Assembly, and includes bills circulating to promote re-employment, protect the safety net programs, conduct more frequent eligibility checks, eliminate fraud, and tune up important programs to deliver a system that works for all Wisconsin.

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The Stronger Workforce Initiative includes:

Indexing UI Benefits to Unemployment Rate ([LRB-2943/1](#))

Sponsored by [Sen. Dan Feyen](#) and [Rep. Alex Dallman](#) & [Rep. Tyler Vorpapel](#)

This bill would tie unemployment benefits to the state unemployment rate. When jobs are plentiful, claimants should spend less time on UI. When the unemployment rate is higher, there will be a longer duration an individual could look for work and remain on the program.

“Ghosting” employers by skipping a job interview ([LRB-3005/1](#))

Sponsored by [Sen. Mary Felzkowski](#) and [Rep. Jon Plumer](#), [Rep. Clint Moses](#) & [Rep. William Penterman](#)

The goal of the unemployment system is to assist displaced workers return to work. Under this bill, if a UI claimant as part of a work search requirement schedules then does not show up for an job interview, DWD would be required to investigate and, if verified, deem the claimant ineligible for benefits that week.

FoodShare Work Requirement ([LRB-5571/1](#))

Sponsored by [Sen. Patrick Testin](#) and [Rep. Mark Born](#)

This bill requires DHS to implement a work requirement for able-bodied adults without dependents to participate in the FoodShare program.

Creating the “Reemployment Assistance” Program ([LRB-4768/1](#))

Sponsored by [Sen. Roger Roth](#) and [Rep. Warren Petryk](#)

This bill rebrands and updated the Unemployment Insurance Program to the Reemployment Assistance. By adding reemployment to the core mission of the department we prioritize the main objective of the program – to help displaced workers find a new job as quickly as possible. The bill requires DWD to match claimants with suitable work and make other changes which help transition individuals from programs to fully employed.

Refusing work to remain on Medical Assistance ([LRB-5788/1](#))

Sponsored by [Sen. Chris Kapenga](#) and [Rep. Calvin Callahan](#) & [Rep. William Penterman](#)

Medical Assistance was never designed to be a permanent source of health care for able bodied individuals without children. The bill would prohibit able-bodied individuals without children from turning down job opportunities for the sole reason of continuing eligibility of Medical Assistance.

Unemployment System Tune Up ([LRB-4346/1](#))

Sponsored by [Sen. Eric Wimberger](#) and [Rep. David Armstrong](#), [Rep. Warren Petryk](#) & [Rep. William Penterman](#)

This bill would provide a comprehensive tune up to fix problems with the Department of Workforce Development's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. With the increase of participants in the unemployment program due to the pandemic, it has become evident that the program is in need of reform. Changes would include: extended call center hours, weekly eligibility crosschecks, require DWD to audit work searches, update misconduct statutes, provide DOA to transfer employees during times of surge, provide JFC oversight of enhanced federal benefits, and provide additional online resources to employers to connect with qualified workers.

Conducting Regular Eligibility Checks ([LRB-5789/1](#))

Sponsored by [Sen. Rob Stafsholt](#) and [Rep. William Penterman](#) & [Rep. Tyler August](#)

Many of our safety net programs do not regularly check for program eligibility either at enrollment or periodically ensure that only those eligible for the program are receiving benefits. This bill allows data sharing between government agencies and updates the systems which check eligibility to ensure up-to-date information is used to calculate benefits.