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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 92nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Filling the Skills Gap

We often hear that our Nation and our State has a skills gap. But what exactly does this mean, and how does it affect us? To answer this question, let me first explain our current situation.

Each year thousands of Wisconsin high school graduates apply for and attend our great universities, but not every student can afford to take out the copious amounts of student loans that are often necessary to finance a post-secondary education.

A significant number of students drop out of school because of these rising costs or other issues. At the same time, we have many skilled positions that are left unfilled in areas such as construction, welding, manufacturing, and various others. These vacancies are the result of an available workforce that does not have the skills needed to qualify for these jobs.

Luckily, there is a solution for this affliction. With an aging workforce, we need to encourage and support the next generation to pick up the torch and learn skills that will provide them with a multitude of high paying job opportunities that can assist them in supporting a family.

Last week, I had the privilege of seeing these opportunities firsthand when I attended the groundbreaking of a Chippewa Valley Technical College Student-Built 2019 Parade home in partnership with The Chippewa Valley Home Builders Association. As someone who has gone through this program, it was great to see such passionate students learning construction skills that will benefit not only them and their families, but our entire community.

Through technical colleges, apprenticeships, and other programs, we can rebuild the workforce needed to provide for a better tomorrow. These programs help teach the next generation the real-world skills needed to compete in a thriving economy.

While the unemployment rate continues to be at a historic low, I know that there is more to be accomplished. As always, feel free to contact my office with questions, comments, or concerns.

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