



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11/01/2016

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Coming Together for Tomorrow's Workforce

Madison – Representative Romaine Quinn (R-Rice Lake) Rural Wisconsin's greatest resource is its people. Our way of life encourages us to develop a strong work ethic and a can do attitude that gets the job done. Looking toward the future, we want to ensure that we are helping young men and women to harness their passions to pursue family-supporting careers in industries right here at home. To that end, the Rural Wisconsin Initiative seeks to further encourage the partnerships between local businesses, K-12 schools, and area technical colleges that have arisen in recent years to prepare the next generation's workforce.

To that end, we will continue to advocate for increased funding for Youth Apprenticeship Grants and the Apprenticeship Completion Awards program, while also encouraging apprenticeship credits be made available in high school so that students can emerge from school more workforce ready.

Wisconsin should encourage schools to diversify educational opportunities. That is why we seek to create a revenue cap exemption for public schools that make investments in capital infrastructure equipment, such as a welding unit. Giving students a chance to learn the skills associated with a profession in the trades not only gives them a workforce readiness advantage, but also reinforces the importance of these family supporting jobs that too often go unfilled in our communities due to a lack of trained workers.

We of course know that every person takes a different path to the workforce. We all have different passions and interests, and sometimes it can take time to determine what path we want to pursue. Too often, students graduate from high school and head to a 4 year university, only to discover that that path is not for them. Upon leaving the university, the former student is often left alone with little guidance or knowledge of what to do next. Rep. Krug (Nekoosa) has drafted a bill for the Rural Wisconsin Initiative that will enable young people to embark on their "2nd start" more quickly. This bill enables Wisconsin technical colleges and 2 year colleges to contact a student immediately once they make the determination that a four year university is not the right fit for them. This empowers students by enabling them to transition to another educational experience more seamlessly, and helps them avoid years spent on the periphery of or outside of the workforce.

Finally, we need to not only harness the talent already in rural Wisconsin, but we have to grow the talent pool. That is why we are reintroducing legislation to provide loan repayment assistance to young people from other states who have completed a form of post-secondary education to relocate to our communities. This legislation is modeled on Rural Opportunity Zone programs that have seen success in other states, such as Kansas and Oklahoma.

By working together with businesses, schools, and post-secondary educational institutions, we can help our kids find their passions and harness their energies toward good paying jobs that can keep rural Wisconsin moving forward.

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