



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **Roth, Steineke Introduce Plan to Modernize Civil Service System**

*Improvements allow the State to remain competitive in current job market*

Madison –State Senator Roger Roth (R-Appleton) and Assembly Majority Leader, Representative Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) have unveiled legislation to reform Wisconsin’s civil service system. Their proposal contains reforms in four areas: the hiring process, job performance evaluation, “just cause” definition, and the appeals process. The purpose of the legislation is to prepare for the high number of state employee retirements expected in the near future by updating state employment laws so that Wisconsin can attract, hire, and retain the best employees.

“Wisconsin has a long, proud history of having a strong civil service system for its employees,” said Senator Roth. “This proposal aims to modernize the current system in a way that will help Wisconsin remain competitive in its hiring practices and reward employees for their service.”

Many of the changes included in the proposal were initiated by input from state agency officials who identified a number of ways to improve the current hiring process for civil service positions. In response to agency suggestions, the legislation removes the requirement of the flawed entrance exam and updates the policy to be a resume-based screening process, similar to the private sector. It also implements a 60-day hiring goal. Currently, it may take several months and cost tens of thousands of dollars to conduct a search for a single, posted position.

“The fact of the matter is that Wisconsin is in direct competition with the private sector to hire the highest quality employees,” noted Representative Steineke. “And when the state is not as nimble as the private sector, we lose. We shouldn’t be relying on an exam process that is easily manipulated and an inaccurate representation of an individual’s skillset, and we shouldn’t expect applicants to wait for months to schedule an interview.”

The legislative proposal also moves to a system that rewards civil service employees for exemplary service with merit-based raises. Additionally, it provides a definition of “just cause” in regards to an agency’s ability to terminate an employee. In doing so, the proposal provides clarity for employees and clearly establishes that employment may only be terminated based on clearly-defined terms.

“I think that it is important to recognize that the State is a unique employer and should without a doubt provide employees with protections from political backlash,” noted Sen. Roth. “However, there is significant room to implement best practices from the private sector to help make our state and its civil service system run smoothly and efficiently. Ultimately, we want to make sure that public service is a desirable career.”

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