



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SEN. JACQUE'S BILL FACILITATING IN-DEMAND JOB TRAINING CLEARS COMMITTEE *Bi-partisan initiative expands apprenticeship equipment assistance under the "Tools of the Trade" Program*

MADISON... To help develop skilled workers desperately needed by Wisconsin employers, a Senate committee yesterday afternoon unanimously passed a bipartisan measure advancing apprenticeship learning under the "Tools of the Trade" program.

State Sen. André Jacque (R- De Pere), co-author of the measure with State Rep. Dave Murphy, said the legislation addresses a significant financial barrier to entering well-paying skilled trade careers.

"The most recent data available showed the median salary for students completing an apprenticeship to be over \$84,000," Sen. Jacque said. "Apprenticeships have been successful in helping meet the growing demand for these family-supporting jobs, but the financial challenges can be daunting."

To meet this need, Sen. Jacque said his proposal enhances the Tools of the Trade apprenticeship grant program by providing the Wisconsin Technical College System Board with an additional \$100,000 per academic year to assist technical college students who have undertaken apprenticeship training courses in conjunction with instruction at their schools with the costs of specialized equipment. The funding addresses the current backlog of qualified applicants and expands opportunities to Wisconsin's tribal colleges as well.

"Since the Tools of the Trade program was established in 2013, approximately 95 percent of past recipients have either completed their apprenticeships or continued their training the following semester, a truly exceptional success rate among technical college financial aid programs," Sen. Jacque said. "Over \$2 million in Tools of the Trade scholarships have been awarded to apprentices in Wisconsin since the program was expanded to apprentices at all WTCS colleges nine years ago."

Under the bill, each individual student who qualifies is eligible to receive up to \$1,500 to assist in paying for materials and expenses associated with the apprenticeship training program, including tools, clothing, equipment, and supplies. At the request of Wisconsin's tribal governments, the bill also allocates \$21,000 annually in tribal gaming revenue for apprenticeship Tools of the Trade grants at our state's tribal colleges.

"This legislation enhances a proven educational pipeline into well-paying, skilled trade careers," Sen. Jacque said. "Continued growth of manufacturing, which accounts for about \$65 billion – nearly 19 percent - of Wisconsin's GDP, counts on workers being able to learn the skills these employers need."

Sen. Jacque said the measure ([Senate Bill 93](#)) was drafted with input and support from the Wisconsin Technical College System and is formally supported by the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association, Associated Builders and Contractors, Wisconsin Technology Council, Menominee Indian Tribe and the Ho-Chunk Nation.

"Apprenticeship education provides opportunities for this generation to build better lives for themselves and their families," Sen. Jacque said. "At the same time, our Wisconsin economy will benefit from a growing highly-skilled workforce."

Tools of the Trade must now pass both houses of the Legislature and be signed by the Governor to become law.

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin's First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.