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Rep. Callahan Instructs Governor Evers to Update DWD Systems

[Madison, WI] – Rep. Calvin Callahan (R-Tomahawk) supported legislation during yesterday’s Assembly floor session that directs Governor Evers to modernize the Unemployment Insurance (UI) computer systems at the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). Through an amendment, this legislation also protects businesses, schools, and local governments from frivolous lawsuits and provides more relief to those who lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

“Since the beginning of the pandemic, thousands of Wisconsinites looked to Governor Evers’ DWD for assistance after losing their jobs,” said Rep. Callahan. “Unfortunately, the governor has failed to lead the state in its time of need. The governor could have improved the DWD’s outdated systems himself over the last two years, but has not done so. Yesterday’s legislation provides a roadmap of improvements towards that end.”

Under the legislation passed by State Senate last Thursday and the Assembly yesterday, DWD is required to issue a request for proposals (RFP) within 30 days after the effective date of the bill. The computer upgrade project must begin by June 30, 2021. The bill requires federal funds to be used first before using state dollars. The governor already has the ability to procure and finance a new computer system through the state master lease program.

Earlier this session, the governor vetoed the Coronavirus Relief Bill passed by the Legislature. Yesterday’s legislation also included several common sense initiatives that were a part of that bill:

- Exempts UI one-week waiting period through March 14
- Includes civil liability exemption language
- Provides benefit charging, work-share, and extended benefits provisions

“I have constituents who are still waiting to hear back from DWD on their UI status,” stated Rep. Callahan. “I was proud to support this legislation and I hope this helps move the process along for those still in the system and anyone who may be in the future.”

The legislation passed the Assembly in a 89-0, receiving wide bipartisan support in both houses. The bill is now on its way to the governor’s desk for his signature.

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The 35th Assembly District includes all of Lincoln County and portions of Langlade, Marathon, Oneida, and Shawano Counties.