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Rep. Considine on Jobs and the Economy

Madison – Today, the Wisconsin State Legislature met to discuss a handful of proposals. One of these bills was 2021 Assembly Bill 336 (AB 336) which would end federal unemployment benefit programs. Representative Dave Considine (D-Baraboo) released the following statement after adjournment:

“Today I voted against AB 336 because this proposal is not the solution to our worker shortage. It’s true that we have a tight labor market and employers have unfilled jobs. Unfortunately this is not a new problem. It isn’t a problem created by unemployment benefits or COVID-19.

“There have been job openings across many sectors for the past few years. In fact prior to the pandemic many businesses expressed frustration about not being able to find enough workers at the wages they were offering. This is a long-term problem that requires a long-term solution, and AB 336 isn’t it.

“Additionally, these federal unemployment benefits are in large part why Wisconsin is in such good financial shape. This week the Legislative Fiscal Bureau released new revenue estimates showing revenue projections that are \$4.4 billion higher than anticipated. The Fiscal Bureau largely attributed this to the enhanced unemployment benefits and American Rescue Plan Act. Due to this information, it is even less advisable for us to refuse federal money. Now is not the time to divest from the very programs that are driving Wisconsin’s economic recovery.

“I know our farms, tourist attractions, and businesses need staff to work. The worker shortage is unsustainable for many businesses. That is why I am working on this issue to find solutions. One of these solutions was brought to me by a constituent, who wants expanded work visas. This employer is even willing to transport and house workers if it means he can fill the gaps in the company. This is a better solution because it widens our labor pool and fills the holes that have long-existed in our workforce.

“I will continue to work towards and advocate for those who are unable to get back to work, and for real solutions to find additional workers for our labor gaps.”

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