



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Bi-partisan Employment First Legislation Clears the Assembly

Bill makes Wisconsin a national leader in promoting policies that assist people with disabilities find community based employment

MADISON, Wis. – Today, the State Assembly unanimously approved Assembly Bill (AB) 625 also known as the Employment First bill. This bi-partisan legislation promotes state agency collaboration to enhance competitive integrated employment (CIE) and workplace choice for people across Wisconsin. CIE is the employment of individuals with disabilities in a workplace in the community working alongside people without a disability. AB 625 is authored by Representatives James Edming (R-Glen Flora) and Jimmy Anderson (D-Fitchburg) and Senator Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst).

“Having access to a job is about more than just collecting a paycheck. It is about community integration, building social connections, and a sense of personal pride,” said Rep. Anderson. “Supporting community integrated employment will lead to a more productive and inclusive business environment.”

Several state agencies have responsibilities to fund services to help youth and adults with disabilities find employment. However, at times these services are duplicated or fragmented. Under AB 625 the agencies with responsibilities in this area are required to collaborate and develop a joint plan to assist people with disabilities in finding employment in the community.

“Many people with disabilities want to work in the community, but just need a little help to do so,” said Rep. Edming. “The collaboration required under this bill will help state agencies to work better together to help provide these folks with the support they need to work in the community.”

Wisconsin has outpaced the nation annually in its efforts to integrate individuals with disabilities into our workforce. Despite our best efforts, only 41% of all working-age Wisconsinites with disabilities are employed. AB 625 seeks to improve that number and will make Wisconsin a national leader in promoting policies that assist people with disabilities in finding employment in the community.

“We can do better in Wisconsin,” said Sen. Tiffany. “AB 625 directs state agencies to work with individuals with disabilities wishing to enter the workforce to best meet their needs. Wisconsin can lead the way.”

AB 625 now moves on to the State Senate for further consideration.

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