

WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**STEVE DOYLE**

94th DISTRICT

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## **“Skills Gap” Bill Gets Senate Hearing** *Lassa/Doyle Proposal Creates Rapid Response Grants*

**Madison** — A bill to close Wisconsin’s “skills gap”, authored by State Senator Julie Lassa (D-Stevens Point) and Rep. Steve Doyle (D-Onalaska), received a public hearing in the State Senate today before the Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges.

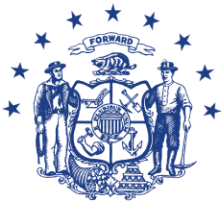
Senate Bill 44, the Workforce Growth Program would provide rapid response grants to technical colleges to expand their capacity to train workers in high demand skills. At the hearing, tech college representatives reported an estimated 39,000 jobs requiring technical college level skills training that will exceed the colleges’ capacity over a two year period.

“Businesses all over the state have told us how difficult it is for them to find workers with the specialized skills they need,” Lassa said. “Their inability to find or train the skilled workforce they require is a major impediment to job growth in our state. At the same time, people are waiting in line to get trained at our tech colleges. This bill will address that skills gap and help put people back to work in good-paying jobs.”

“These competitive grants are a perfect marriage between technical colleges and local businesses and will allow them the flexibility to create individualized solutions to the skills gap,” said Doyle.

Under the program, a business, a consortium of multiple businesses, workforce development board or an economic development organization can partner with their local technical college to apply to WTCS through a competitive grant process for workforce growth funding to meet their local skilled worker training needs.

Depending on the needs in a particular region or industry in our state, the grants could be used to expand tech college facilities, purchase equipment, hire faculty or develop curriculum. Workforce Growth Program funding could also be used to address student needs such as training scholarships, student career support services, job placement, and business recruitment.



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“The tech colleges have been on the front lines of preparing Wisconsin workers for today’s careers,” Lassa said. “Tech college graduates have an 88% success rate in finding work within six months of graduation, at median starting salary of more than \$36,000. The Workforce Growth Program will expand the tech colleges’ capacity to help Wisconsin workers and businesses compete in the changing world economy.”

“This bill will help the people on the ground bridge the skills gap by connecting businesses to the tech colleges who will be training their future workforce,” said Doyle. “It will be a fast and effective way to help jumpstart Wisconsin’s economy.”

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