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WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

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State Senate Passes *Wisconsin Works for Everyone Welfare Reform Package* *Two Additional Kapenga Bills on Track Advance through State Senate*

Madison - Senator Chris Kapenga (R-Delafield) released the following statement after the State Senate passed the *Wisconsin Works for Everyone* package:

"Today we moved one step closer to making meaningful and effective changes that will transform the lives of those stuck in the generational cycle of poverty. This package of bills puts Wisconsin on the forefront of states who realize the best solution to fighting poverty is through the power of work. 97% of people who work full time are not in poverty, proving that a work-first approach is the best solution to help set people on the path to self-sufficiency. Additionally, as the demand for labor continues to rise in Wisconsin, we cannot afford to leave people on the sidelines."

This plan also makes a number of changes including:

- SS AB 1 and 2 strengthen the work opportunities for able-bodied adults by encouraging greater work participation through an expanded 30-hour per week work opportunity and expanding FSET to able-bodied adults with children who are in school (Aged 6+).
- SS AB 3 increases program integrity by instituting reasonable asset limits, ensuring only the truly needy receive public assistance.
- SS AB 4 assists individuals receiving public housing assistance that are struggling with addiction by testing for substance abuse and connecting them to resources to help overcome addiction. The bill also helps connect able-bodied adults utilizing public housing assistance to gainful employment.
- SS AB 5 applies forward thinking solutions data driven solutions to address poverty by using a periodic or "paycheck style" Earned Income Tax Credit payment pilot.
- SS AB 6 improves performance outcomes in public assistance by monetarily incentivizing vendors to place individuals in long-term, good paying jobs.
- SS AB 7 creates a framework to implement pay for success contracting which funds private, free-market solutions to social problems.
- SS AB 8 builds on our commitment to increase child support compliance statewide by requiring that a parent comply with court ordered support, or act in good faith to achieve compliance as a condition of receiving public assistance.
- SS AB 9 creates a savings account program in Medicaid similar to a Health Savings Account, giving participants a more active role in their healthcare choices.

"We all agree that work can be transformative in a person's life, leading to increased income potential, but it also provides purpose, identity, and structure. By passing these bills we are extending a hand up to the folks struggling with poverty and helping to facilitate impactful change far beyond a paycheck."

In addition to the *Wisconsin Works for Everyone* package, the State Senate was also on track to advance Assembly Bill 508 and Assembly Bill 710, both authored by Senator Kapenga.

Assembly Bill 508

Under current law, Wisconsin apprenticeship programs must set a ratio of apprentices-to-journeyworkers that differ from trade to trade. Assembly Bill 508 would set a baseline ratio across trades of 1 apprentice to 1 journeyworker.

“With the flurry of development activity around the state, the need for skilled workers is more evident than ever. Assembly Bill 508 corrects a major bottleneck that prevents workers from pursuing fulfilling careers in the skilled trades by allowing more people to get involved with apprenticeships.”

Assembly Bill 710

Currently, penalties for intentional unemployment insurance benefit fraud are substantially less than penalties for similar crimes. Assembly Bill 710 increases the criminal penalties for UI benefit fraud by aligning them with the penalties for theft.

“Intentionally defrauding the unemployment insurance system is no less wrong than stealing from a store or bank, and the penalties set forth in this bill reflect that reality. By aligning the penalties for UI fraud with theft, we can deter individuals from intentionally stealing from taxpayers’ contribution to the system.”
