



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

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Contact: Sen. Roger Roth: 608-266-0718

Rep. Steineke: 608-266-2401

## **Roth, Steineke: Reforms will Maximize Employee Effectiveness and Reward Exemplary Work**

Madison –State Senator Roger Roth (R-Appleton) and Assembly Majority Leader, Representative Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) offered additional information today on their plan to update Wisconsin’s civil service law, specifically in regards to implementing a consistent performance evaluation system, merit pay and standardizing the probationary period.

“Once we attract good employees to work for the state, our next challenge is to retain them,” said Sen. Roth. “We want state employees to know that their service is valued, and if their work is exemplary, they will be rewarded.”

Right now, there are no consistent performance evaluations across state agencies. Under the new civil service reforms, the Division of Personnel Management (DPM) is directed to study the feasibility of all agencies utilizing electronic personnel files and a uniform personnel evaluation system.

The bill establishes a sum of \$6 million to be used for the purposes of Discretionary Merit Compensation (DMC) otherwise known as merit-based bonuses, giving the agencies the ability and flexibility to reward those employees who exceed workplace expectations.

“Our state has thousands of outstanding public employees who work hard to provide critical services to the taxpayers,” said Department of Administration Secretary Scott A. Neitzel. “The DMC program was put in place to recognize these great employees. Further utilization of DMCs will help ensure that State government is operating efficiently and effectively. We are supportive of expanding this program and look forward to working with the Legislature on this important bill.”

The bill also moves to standardize the length of an employee’s probationary period as opposed to the current system of varying periods. In conversations with state agencies, a common concern was how critical a time the probationary period is to determine if employees are good workers and capable of duties assigned. It’s important to note that these periods may be waived after one year on the job. Standardizing the probationary period to a two year period gives employees more time to adjust to their roles and allows agencies more freedom to waive the probation.

“Our goal is to create a system that values our workers potential by recognizing their skills and abilities, not merely hours worked,” added Rep. Steineke.

Additional aspects of the job performance evaluation reforms include changing the way layoffs are conducted. Under this bill, layoffs will be determined primarily by job performance, as well as seniority and disciplinary records. Agencies will also be directed to maintain employee disciplinary records and review them in the hiring process.

“These changes are about fairness,” continued Sen. Roth. “We want to hire, retain and promote employees with a uniform process based on their performance.”

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