



Date: October 9th, 2013

To: Members of the Committee on Workforce Development

From: Representative Petryk

Re: Testimony regarding Assembly Bill 399

Good Morning Chair Loudenbeck and members of the Committee. I appreciate this opportunity to come before the Committee today to speak on Assembly Bill 399 and I appreciate Senator Gudex being here as well to show his support for this legislation. As part of this session's Workforce Development package, Assembly Bill 399 was drafted and introduced at the request of Governor Walker.

Assembly Bill 399 creates an incentive program for high schools to offer an industry-recognized certification program for in-demand employment fields, offering \$1,000 per pupil as an incentive payment to school districts. This bill will require the state superintendent to annually confer with the Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Technical College system to identify industries and occupations within Wisconsin that face workforce shortages. Eligible school districts will then establish programs encouraging students to earn industry recognized certificates in high-need occupations before graduation from high school. This bill will also require the department to award grants of \$1,000 per pupil for each pupil who completed an industry-recognized certification. The program would begin in the 2014-15 school year giving time for the occupations to be chosen and schools to prepare and will allocate \$3 million to the grant program.

The state of Kansas introduced a similar program in 2012 which is already seeing success. In the first year of their program, Kansas generated a 50 percent headcount increase in secondary students at the postsecondary level, as well as a 54 percent increase in college credit hours over the previous year. Their projected figures for next year are looking equally as promising. By taking college-level career and technical education courses during their secondary education, students are more likely to enter into a postsecondary program, to complete that program and to pursue an associate or even bachelor's degree. I fully expect that with the passage of Assembly Bill 399, Wisconsin will see many of these same success stories for our state's students.

AB 399 is a simple yet significant way that we can help our graduating seniors get a head start as they prepare to enter the workforce. I ask for your support today on this bipartisan piece of legislation.



State Senator
Rick Gudex

District 18

October 9, 2013

To: The Assembly Committee on Workforce Development
From: Sen. Rick Gudex
Re: **Assembly Bill 399**

Madame Chair and members of the committee, thank you for hearing this bill today.

There are two sides to the jobs coin: first, businesses who need skilled workers but can't find them; second, workers or potential future workers who want steady, secure work but who may not know precisely how to attain that.

This bill takes a small step toward helping both those groups.

Under this bill, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will confer with the Department of Workforce Development and the technical colleges to identify the jobs and skills that are needed, or will soon be needed, particularly regarding entry level positions.

DPI will then approve "industry-recognized certification programs" that address those needs – they already have a long list of available programs, and there are very likely a lot more out there. School districts can then make those programs available to their students. For every student who completes a certification program and then graduates, the district will receive a \$1,000 grant.

Everybody wins: local businesses get more available skilled workers, who may be available for part-time work and internships even before graduation. Students get some real-life experience and career skills. Schools get to help their students prepare for life after school, and get a little more money for their efforts.

Thank you for your attention to this simple and bipartisan bill. We urge your support.

**Assembly Committee on Workforce Development
October 9, 2013**

**Department of Public Instruction Testimony
on 2013 Assembly Bill 399**

I want to thank Chairperson Loudenbeck and committee members for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Mike Bormett and I serve as the budget director for the Wisconsin DPI. With me today is Sharon Wendt, the director of the department's Career and Technical Education Team. On behalf of State Superintendent Tony Evers we are here today to testify in support of Assembly Bill 399 (AB 399).

State Superintendent Evers first proposed these career and technical education (CTE) incentive grants as part of his 2013-15 biennial budget request in September 2012, and the department is pleased to see it moving forward now as separate legislation with bipartisan support.

AB 399 would provide \$3,000,000 GPR in FY15 to establish a new incentive program that encourages school districts to increase the number of pupils graduating high school with an industry recognized credential in key occupations designated as being in highest need of additional skilled workers. Industry certifications provide on-going information on the extent to which students are attaining the necessary knowledge and skills for entry into and advancement in post-secondary education and careers in their chosen career pathway. Superintendent Evers supports efforts such as AB 399 to expand career pathways which help pupils to more quickly earn credentials to enhance their employability. In addition, this proposal augments DPI's on-going collaboration with the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) to develop and implement Programs of Study in high skill, high wage, and high demand occupations.

In January 2012, Governor Walker created the Wisconsin College & Workforce Readiness Council to recommend policies and programs to further improve pupils' college and career readiness. The Council discussed a variety of measures, including designing shorter and less costly degree programs aimed at filling high-need positions, and expanding dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities for high school pupils, allowing them to earn college and workforce training credits while in high school.

This CTE incentive grants program is similar to one recently implemented in the state of Kansas. The bill establishes an incentive for school districts to get pupils involved in CTE by giving districts \$1,000 for each pupil who graduates from that district with certain recognized CTE certificates. With the \$3,000,000 appropriation, it would fund grants to districts for up to 3,000 eligible graduates. The list of industries and occupations that are eligible for the incentive payments will be produced from a collaborative effort between staff at DPI, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and WTCS.

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Scott Walker, Governor
Reginald J. Newson, Secretary

**Assembly Committee on Workforce Development
Assembly Bill 399, Career and Technical Education Incentive Grants**

October 9th, 2013

Testimony provided by Jonathan Barry, Deputy Secretary

Chairperson Loudenbeck and members of the Assembly Committee on Workforce Development:

I am Jonathan Barry, Deputy Secretary at the Department of Workforce Development and I appear before you today to speak in favor of Assembly Bill 399.

Assembly Bill 399 demonstrates Governor Walker's continued focus to assist residents of the state of Wisconsin by growing the economy, developing our workforce, transforming education, reforming government and investing in our infrastructure. Our budget invested over \$100 million in workforce development and as one of eight workforce development items in Governor Walker's fall workforce development package, AB 399 continues to build on that investment.

Coupled with AB 398, the Technical Excellence Higher Education Scholarship program, this bill will increase promotion and enrollment in high school classes intended to prepare youth for employment in the technical trades. With the shortage of skilled workers in many technical fields, increased incentives to both high schools who provide classes and students who excel in those classes is important for the future of our workforce. The bill serves as another tool to assist employers in attaining more skilled workers to meet demand, and will provide another pathway to a high-paying, rewarding career for Wisconsin's youth.

By providing incentives to school districts and affording high school graduates an opportunity to graduate from high school with an industry recognized credential, AB 399 provides a hand-up to those who wish to either further their education in a technical field or immediately enter the workforce with the technical knowledge to operate at a high level. Wisconsin's workforce is the most hardworking in the nation, and by providing additional pathways to gainful employment, this AB 399 will help ensure that remains the case for years to come.

Through the linkage of AB 399, the Department of Workforce Development looks forward to continuing its partnership with the Department of Public Instruction by providing support in identifying industries and occupations that face shortages of adequately trained, entry-level workers. Through this inter-agency cooperation, the state of Wisconsin will continue to move Wisconsin's workforce forward under Governor Walker's leadership.

I would be happy to entertain questions at this time.