

☞ **09hr_SC-CFWD_sb0086_pt01**



Details:

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

**WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS**

2009-10

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on ... Children & Families & Workforce
Development (SC-CFWD)**

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

Senate

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Children and Families and Workforce Development

Senate Bill 86

Relating to: school conference and activities leave.

By Senators Carpenter, Lassa, Lehman, Plale, Taylor, Erpenbach, Miller and Hansen; cosponsored by Representatives Black, A. Ott, Smith, Zigmunt, Sinicki, Benedict, Parisi, Pope-Roberts, Poca, Grigsby, A. Williams, Young, Cullen, Fields, Zepnick, Pasch, Berceau and Soletski.

February 25, 2009 Referred to Committee on Children and Families and Workforce Development.

February 17, 2010 **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present: (5) Senators Jauch, Lassa, Vinehout, Kedzie and Hopper.
Absent: (0) None.

Appearances For

- Tim Carpenter — Senator, 3rd Senate District
- Chris Thomas-Cramer, Madison — Bd. for People with Developmental Disabilities
- Amy Steac, Milwaukee — 9 to 5
- Len Herricks, Oshkosh — WEAC
- Spencer Black — Representative, 77th Assembly District
- Rick Grobschmidt, Madison — DPI
- Kimberly Wdas, Madison — Wisconsin Catholic Conference
- Phil Neuenfeldt, Milwaukee — WI AFL-CIO
- Jeff Plale — Senator
- Joseph Quick, Madison — Madison Metropolitan School District

Appearances Against

- John Metcalf, Madison — WMC

Appearances for Information Only

- None.

Registrations For

- Deb Sybell — WEAC

Registrations Against

- Sally Celenba, North Prairie — Aerotone
- Bill Schultz, Mosinee — Lee's Piggly Wiggly
- Jerry Howard, Galena — WI Grovers Association

- Tom Verhyn, Kaukauna — Larry's
- Brad Brooks, Norfolk — WCA Board/Affiliated Foods Midwest
- Joseph Knowland, Reedsburg — Viking Village Foods
- Rob Budd, Sun Prairie — HyVee, Inc
- Michael George, Albany — HyVee, Inc
- Patrick Fox, Hartland — Fox Bros. Piggly Wiggly
- Kenneth Riley, Janesville — Sentry Foods Store
- Glenn Palmquist, Waukesha — Sentry Foods
- Aija Jantz, Racine — Supervalu
- Theresa Feist, Beaver Dam — Piggly Wiggly
- Ruth Gpping, Burlington — Sentry Foods
- Kevin Metcalfe, Monona — Metcalfe's Market
- Jeff Greenheck, Madison — Metcalfe's Market
- John Vanden Wymelezberg, Wrightstown — Dick's Family Foods
- Tim Metcalfe, Madison — Metcalfe Markets
- Pamela Coy, Reedsburg — Viking Village Inc
- David Ryman, Janesville — Certco Inc
- Storm Walsvik, Appleton — Supervalu
- Marlin Greenfield, Oshkosh — Festival Foods
- Kirk Stoa, Holmen — Festival Foods
- Terry Everett, Verona — Certco Inc
- Brian Ryan, Johnson Creek — Emil's Pizza
- Walter Bohrer, Oconomowoc — WI Sonvenier Milk Caps
- Kent Burnstad, Tomah — Burnstad's
- Mike Smits, Green Bay — Supervalu
- Jeff McClurk, Green Bay — Supervalu
- Thomas Branta, Pleasant Prairie — Supervalu
- Alan Alden, Wausau — TA Solberg Co Inc
- Angie Dreifuerst, Rhinelander — Trig's
- Steve Heise, Rhinelander — Trig's
- Jeff Zollpriesten, Weson — Quality Foods
- David Kotwitz, Edgerton — Edgerton Piggly Wiggly
- Michael Day, Cambridge — Cambridge Piggly Wiggly
- Jason Fritsche, Wausau — Quality Foods
- Jim Hintz, Wisconsin Rapids — Quality Foods
- David Storey, Madison — Independent Business Association and WI Retail Council
- Chad Krueger, Appleton — Citizen
- Tom Howells, Madison — WI Motor Carriers Association
- Bill Smith, Madison — National Federation of Independent Business
- Pat Kading, Sun Prairie — HyVee Inc

Registrations for Information Only

- None.

April 22, 2010

Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1.

Stephanie Wilson
Committee Clerk



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Senator Robert Jauch, Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Children and Families and Workforce Development

FROM: Kim Wadas, Associate Director, Education and Health Care

DATE: February 17, 2010

RE: Senate Bill 86, School Conference and Activities Leave

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference urges your support for Senate Bill 86, which allows employees to take leave from work to attend a child's day care or school function.

By allowing parents the flexibility to attend important school functions and to play a direct role in the daily instruction of their children, SB 86 would facilitate an essential element of successful education, parental involvement. In his 1981 encyclical letter, *On Human Work*, Pope John Paul II discussed the relationship between work and family life at some length. In his discussion the Pope said the following:

These two spheres of values – one linked to work and the other consequent on the family nature of human life – must be properly united and must properly permeate each other... Two aspects of work in a sense come into play here: the one making family life and its upkeep possible, and the second making possible the achievement of the purposes of the family, especially education (#11).

The Pope continued by stating that work itself should be “organized and adapted in such a way as to respect the requirements of the person, and his or her forms of life, above all life in the home” (#19).

These ideas are echoed by the Catholic bishops of the United States in their pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, and in their 1992 statement, “Putting Children and Families First.” The American bishops have emphasized that the true measure of an economy is not just what it produces, but whether or not it protects human dignity and promotes family life. Giving employees time off to attend to their children's educational needs does just that.

As the bishops reflected in *Economic Justice for All*, “economic and social policies of the work world should be continually evaluated in light of their impact on the strength and stability of family life” (#93). The well-being of families is a proper concern for government and public authorities. In several ways, the political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it,

and to ensure that a variety of goods are available to families in order to meet their responsibilities to one another and the broader community.

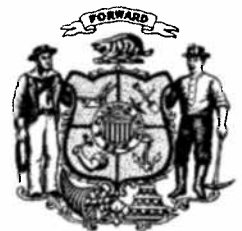
SB 86 is consistent with these values. It affirms and encourages parents to be more involved in the education of their children by being present at school for significant events in the educational life of their child. By restructuring the workplace to make room for school visits, the bill represents a commitment by the rest of us as "indirect employers" to support parents in their roles as primary educators.

By allowing parents to attend and participate in school and day care activities, we affirm our commitment to make the family an integral part of education in the State of Wisconsin.

The WCC urges your support for SB 86.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Great Schools
benefit
Everyone!*

TO: Senate Committee on Children and Families and Workforce Development

FR: Wisconsin Education Association Council

DA: February 17, 2010

RE: Senate Bill 86 (School Conference and Activities Leave)

The Wisconsin Education Association Council supports Senate Bill 86 allowing parents to take up to 16 hours of leave time from work to participate in their children's school activities and conferences *that cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours.*

Educators need parents as partners in education. Parental involvement helps children to be successful in school. Parents are an important part of an education team which includes student, educators and communities working together for a brighter future. When parents are involved, their children achieve higher grades and test scores, develop better attitudes and behavior, attend school more regularly, complete more homework, graduate from high school and enroll in postsecondary education. When family and school work together, everyone benefits.

Some parents who want to play a greater role in their child's education face obstacles. Oftentimes, it's because of work constraints that they aren't allowed the time off they need to attend a parent-teacher conference at night, or a daytime meeting with the school about their child's needs. Making it easier for parents to get time off of work to attend teacher conferences and student activities will increase parental involvement and enhance children's chances for success in school.

This legislation strikes the right balance between facilitating parental involvement in their child's education and respecting the needs of the employer. Under the bill employees must give the employer advance notice of the school conference or activity in a reasonable and practicable manner. Employers still have the authority to deny leave if the request will unduly disrupt the workplace, which is defined in DWD 225.02(3).

According to the Education Commission of the States, at least 15 states encourage, urge, expect or direct employers to enable parents to attend school activities such as parent/teacher conferences: Alabama, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia.¹

Let's add Wisconsin to a growing list of states that have enacted laws to facilitate parental engagement in children's education. As a state, we need to stand up and say, "This is important to the child, to the family and to the community."

For all of these reasons, please support Senate Bill 86.

If you have any questions, contact Deb Sybell, WEAC Legislative Program Coordinator, at (608) 298-2327.

¹ <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/59/11/5911.pdf> Mary Bell, President

Dan Burkhalter, Executive Director





WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*

Testimony of Len Herricks
Senate Committee on Children and Families and Workforce Development
Senate Bill 86
February 17, 2010

My name is Len Herricks and I live at 1960 Cliffview Court in Oshkosh. I am addressing you today as a 36-year teacher with the Oshkosh Area School District and as the President of the Oshkosh Education Association representing the 814 teachers of the District.

The Oshkosh Education Association supports Senate Bill 86 allowing parents to take up to 16 hours of leave time from work to participate in their children's school activities and conferences that cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours. As a 36-year veteran teacher I know from experience the importance of parental involvement. Involved parents make for successful students. Successful students make better citizens allowing for better communities. I ask you to look at education as a service to the community that builds commonwealth. Education funding is an investment that increases that commonwealth. Parental involvement helps families to take full advantage of that investment.

Over the course of my career the traditional family has changed. In my early years, Mom came in during the evening conference or parent meetings while Dad worked the night shift. Later in my career, Mom and Dad were both working and it was difficult for either of them to come to school for a conference because of work obligations. Now we have many youngsters who live in a single parent household. Missing work is even harder for these parents who are the primary support for the family. I have heard this statement often, "I would really like to meet with you but I have bills to pay."

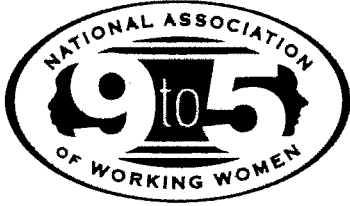
In Oshkosh, we have several students who have a parent incarcerated in the state prisons located in our county. This year, one of our elementary teachers has 24 students in her classroom. Out of the 24 students, 7 have one of their parents incarcerated. More than half of high school dropouts end up in prison at the rate of \$30,000 per year cost to the taxpayer. More parental involvement and support might help us to break this cycle.

During my career, I recall many times where the first parent conference enabled me to put a child on the road to success. I teach high school and hopefully the parent involvement will have been in place long before I start working with the student. If it's not then, my efforts to reach out to parents and involve them are very hard. If you truly want to help bridge the achievement gap in this state, please support Senate Bill 86. We know that parental involvement is critical to student success. Thank you.

Mary Bell, President
Dan Burkhalter, Executive Director







9to5, National Association of Working Women

207 East Buffalo Street, Suite 211, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

• (414) 274-0925 • Fax (414) 272-2870 • www.9to5.org



Testimony of Amy Stear
WI Director 9to5, National Association of Working Women
on SB86 for the Senate Committee on Children and Families and Workforce
Development
February 17, 2010

Good morning and thank you Chairman Jauch and members of the Senate Committee for providing me this opportunity to speak in support of SB86.

I am Amy Stear, WI Director of 9to5, National Association of Working Women. 9to5 represents thousands of working parents nationally and here in Wisconsin. Our membership is primarily working mothers who struggle to balance the demands of their jobs with the needs of their families. Here in Wisconsin our members are mostly low wage mothers living in Milwaukee. Our members are just like you in many ways. They want to support their children both by providing decent housing and food on the table while ensuring their children do well at school. Our members recognize the need for a good education to ensure their children will have a decent chance at a stable economic future. They also know the probability their children will do well in school is linked to their parents' ability to participate in their education. But unlike many of you, they face employment barriers that make it difficult for them to play an active role in their children's school lives.

This is why SB86 is so important to our members. As I said, they work mostly in low wage jobs where they are less likely to have flexibility in work schedules. Many of these women aren't even allowed to take calls at work from their children's schools when an educator, social worker or administrator believe they need to be contacted to support their child. It isn't that these parents don't care to be involved in their children's school lives; often it's that they can't because it would mean putting their paycheck at risk.

We all know children do better in school when their parents are involved in their education. 9to5 has provided the committee with fact sheets and data supporting this but the truth of the matter is this is just plain old common sense. There are many fortunate families in Wisconsin who have flexible work schedules or employers who are understanding about the needs of parents but this is not the case for all of us. Too many children in Milwaukee will drop out of school because their parents couldn't leave work to confer with teachers to figure out a plan to support their success in school. And this makes no sense at all - our children are truly our future and they deserve every opportunity to succeed.

9to5 was the lead organization supporting a similar bill that was passed in Colorado in



2009. In Georgia, 9to5 activists and allies are working hard to pass similar legislation. We believe legislation that enables parents to balance the needs of their families with the demands of their work is crucial to the well-being of our communities, our schools and our workplaces in Wisconsin and throughout our nation

I am a single mother of two MPS students and I know how important it has been to my kids that I was able to be a part of their school lives. My employer recognizes the importance of participating in our children's education but not all employers are as understanding. We need good public policy to ensure all workers have the opportunity my family has.





Wisconsin

Memorandum

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Children, Families and Workforce Development

FROM: Bill G. Smith, State Director

DATE: February 17, 2010

RE: Senate Bill 86 – School Conference and Activities Leave

This legislation is introduced with all the best intentions, and I can assure members of the committee, small business employers share the author's commitment to policies that will improve public education in Wisconsin.

NFIB members understand the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children and the value of their participation in legitimate school-related activities.

Although only 16 percent of our members have an official policy governing short periods of leave such as parent-teacher conferences, 91 percent of small business employers typically grant requests for leave when adequate notice is provided, according to studies by NFIB's Research Foundation.

Small business owners believe it is very important they have the flexibility to respond to personal leave requests that will minimize any negative impact on other employees in the workplace. Eighty-one percent, according to research by NFIB, handle personal leave requests on a case-by-case basis.

Therefore, 87% of Wisconsin's NFIB members responding to a survey study are opposed to legislation that requires employers to provide employees time off from work to attend the school activities of their children.

On behalf of Wisconsin's small business community, I respectfully urge members of the committee to oppose passage of Senate Bill 86.

Thank you for your consideration.





WISCONSIN'S BUSINESS VOICE SINCE 1911

TO: Committee on Children Families and Workforce Development
FROM: John Metcalf, Director, Human Resources Policy
DATE: February 17, 2010
RE: Opposition to SB 86 – Mandated School Conference and Activities Leave

Background

Current Wisconsin and Federal Law require employers with 50 or more employees to provide Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) to their employees. The length of leave entitlements vary between the State and Federal laws, as do the qualifying requirements and administration of the two laws. Because of these variations the FMLA's are among the most complex that Wisconsin employers must administer.

School Conference and Activity Leave

SB 86 creates an additional leave entitlement of up to 16 hours of school conference and activities leave in a 12-month period under Wisconsin's FMLA for any employee of an employer, employing at least 50 individuals on a permanent basis in this state. School conference and activities leave may be taken to attend school conferences or classroom activities relating to the employee's child that cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours. In addition, school conference and activities leave may be taken to observe and monitor the day care, preschool, or pre-kindergarten services or programming received by an employee's child, if that observation and monitoring cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours.

Substitution of Paid Leave

An employee may substitute, for portions of school conference and activities leave, other types of paid or unpaid leave provided by the employer, except that an employee may not substitute paid leave of less than an hour for school conference and activities leave for attending a school conference or activity.

Notice of Leave

An employee who intends to take leave to attend a school conference or activity must give the employer advance notice of the conference or activity and must make a reasonable effort to schedule the conference or activity so that it does not unduly disrupt the operations of the employer.

Definition of School

"School" is defined as: a day care center licensed by the Department of Health and Family Services; a day care provider certified for funding by a county department of human services or social services; a day care program established or contracted for by a school board; a public or private preschool or pre-kindergarten, or a public or private school that provides an educational program for one or more grades between kindergarten and 12.

WMC POSITION – OPPOSE

WMC strongly supports conformity of the existing federal and Wisconsin FMLA's that are currently difficult to administer. Until broad conformity occurs between Wisconsin's FMLA and the federal FMLA, WMC opposes any expansion of the state FMLA, including the creation of an additional form of mandated leave. Further, in any given session of the U.S. Congress and the Wisconsin Legislature, legislation to expand the existing state and federal FMLA's are proposed, as well as to mandate further types of leave for other reasons. However, no legislation has been enacted to attempt to coordinate these mandates – creating a significant and growing problem with the administration of mandated as well as employer provided employee leave benefits in U.S. and Wisconsin work places.

Increasingly, businesses provide banks of leave for undefined purposes: vacation, illness and other personal and family needs. Mandating specific types of leave for specified purposes runs counter to the trends in employment and benefits law, and creates further administrative complexities and opportunities for litigation.

For these reasons WMC asks the Committee to oppose Senate Bill 86.



Senate Committee on Children and Families and Workforce Development

Testimony on 2009 Senate Bill 86

I am Assistant State Superintendent Richard Grobschmidt, speaking on behalf of State Superintendent Tony Evers and the Department of Public Instruction, in favor of Senate Bill 86, a bill which would allow time for employees to participate in school conferences and activities for their children.

This proposal removes barriers and creates important protections for parents to be involved in their children's education. Indeed, families are their children's most important and influential teachers. Thirty years of research show that:

- When parents are involved in their children's learning, their children earn higher grades and test scores, and they stay in school longer, and
- When parents are involved in a variety of ways at school, the performance of *all* children in the school tends to improve.

In a recent survey sponsored by the Education Testing Service, teachers, administrators, the public and even parents say lack of parental involvement is the biggest challenge facing schools. We know from the research that all families want to and can help their children learn, regardless of their income or educational level. But wanting to and actually doing it doesn't always come together, especially for working parents juggling the responsibilities of their jobs and families.

We know the importance of schools reaching out to parents, but if parents aren't able to respond because of inflexibility in the work place, then we continue with the same lack of involvement. According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, 10 states require leave for participation in children's educational activities. California offers the most time, with 40 hours a year and no more than eight hours per month, while Washington, D.C., Massachusetts and Vermont offer 24 hours a year. Since low-wage jobs are the least flexible, many parents need this opportunity to be involved with their children's education.

Passing the bill would make an important statement that in Wisconsin we are serious about parents being essential partners in the education of their children.



Sen Carpenter

Tim

Date?

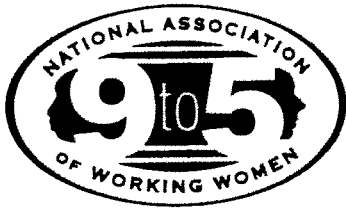
414-719-9957

* please call to let them know
SB 86 testimony about to begin

- black may not be available

Rep
Black
Office

6-7521



9to5, National Association of Working Women

207 East Buffalo Street, Suite 211, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

• (414) 274-0925 • Fax (414) 272-2870 • www.9to5.org



Companion to
SB 86.

Testimony of Jennifer Morales
Mother of three current Milwaukee Public Schools students
and former member (2001-2009) of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors
to
the Senate Education Committee
17 February 2010

Like school finance reform, AB 116 opens doors for children, in this case by opening doors for their parents and guardians.

In my eight years as a Milwaukee school board member, I often heard two refrains from members of the public: “If we already know what works in education, why don’t you just do it?” and “Why aren’t *those* parents involved in their children’s education?” This bill responds to both of those questions:

“If we already know what works in education, why don’t you just do it?” One thing that experienced educators know is how much difference parental involvement in school makes. When addressing every type of concern that might come up in school, from academic, to health, to disciplinary concerns, children do better when they know that there is a solid line of communication between their parents and their teachers. Ask any teacher why one of the first steps in disciplining a child is often having him or her call home. When that child knows that Teacher has Mom’s phone number, and that Mom has enough of a relationship with Teacher to trust the teacher’s version of the story, 9 times out of 10 that child is going to shape up. A key component in building that strong school/home relationship is the parent’s presence in the school, whether it’s at parent-teacher conferences or school assemblies or special classroom events.

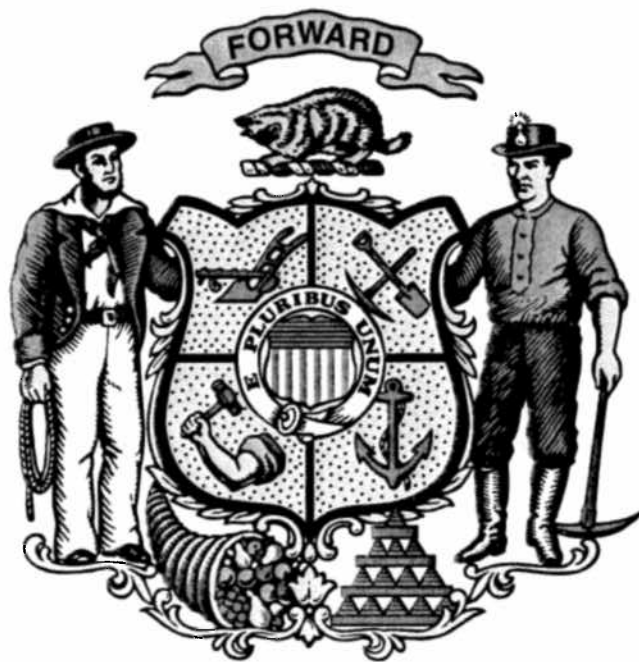
Parent involvement works, but there are structural barriers in many jobs that keep parents from being involved in school—particularly during the class day, when it’s most needed—and it’s the responsibility of policymakers to address these barriers, for the public good.

Which leads to the second refrain I often heard:

“Why aren’t those parents involved in their children’s education?” People who don’t have children in the Milwaukee Public Schools, or any other district in Wisconsin that serves a majority low-income population, might not have the life experiences to understand how many

barriers there are to parent involvement in schools. For most families in Milwaukee, having a full-time stay-at-home parent is not possible. For many, family economic stability requires two working parents, often at multiple jobs. Throw in some childcare obligations for the kids not yet school-aged, a spotty public transportation system, and an inflexible boss, and the end result is a parent who can't make it to parent-teacher conferences before or after work, and certainly not during the school day.

We have to have policies, like AB 116, that make it possible for all parents to be involved in their children's education. We can't complain about parents not being involved in school if we as a society don't open doors to parental involvement. Please support this key first step, AB 116.





WMC
WISCONSIN'S BUSINESS VOICE

TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: John Metcalf, Director, Human Resources Policy
DATE: May 19, 2009
RE: Opposition to AB 116 – Mandated School Conference and Activities Leave

companion to
SB 86.

Background

Current Wisconsin and Federal Law require employers with 50 or more employees to provide Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) to their employees. The length of leave entitlements vary between the State and Federal laws, as do the qualifying requirements and administration of the two laws. Because of these variations the FMLA's are among the most complex that Wisconsin employers must administer.

School Conference and Activity Leave

AB 116 creates an additional leave entitlement of up to 16 hours of school conference and activities leave in a 12-month period under Wisconsin's FMLA for any employee of an employer, employing at least 50 individuals on a permanent basis in this state. School conference and activities leave may be taken to attend school conferences or classroom activities relating to the employee's child that cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours. In addition, school conference and activities leave may be taken to observe and monitor the day care, preschool, or pre-kindergarten services or programming received by an employee's child, if that observation and monitoring cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours.

Substitution of Paid Leave

An employee may substitute, for portions of school conference and activities leave, other types of paid or unpaid leave provided by the employer, except that an employee may not substitute paid leave of less than an hour for school conference and activities leave for attending a school conference or activity.

Notice of Leave

An employee who intends to take leave to attend a school conference or activity must give the employer advance notice of the conference or activity and must make a reasonable effort to schedule the conference or activity so that it does not unduly disrupt the operations of the employer.

Definition of School

"School" is defined as: a day care center licensed by the Department of Health and Family Services; a day care provider certified for funding by a county department of human services or social services; a day care program established or contracted for by a school board; a public or private preschool or pre-kindergarten, or a public or private school that provides an educational program for one or more grades between kindergarten and 12.

WMC POSITION – OPPOSE

WMC strongly supports conformity of the existing federal and Wisconsin FMLA's that are currently difficult to administer. Until broad conformity occurs between Wisconsin's FMLA and the federal FMLA, WMC opposes any expansion of the state FMLA, including the creation of an additional form of mandated leave. Further, in any given session of the U.S. Congress and the Wisconsin Legislature, legislation to expand the existing state and federal FMLA's are proposed, as well as to mandate further types of leave for other reasons. However, no legislation has been enacted to attempt to coordinate these mandates – creating a significant and growing problem with the administration of mandated as well as employer provided employee leave benefits in U.S. and Wisconsin work places.

Therefore, we urge you to vote against AB 116.





Wisconsin State AFL-CIO *...the voice for working families.*

David Newby, President • Sara J. Rogers, Exec. Vice President • Phillip L. Neuenfeldt, Secretary-Treasurer

Companion to
SB 86.

TO: Assembly Education Committee
FROM: Phil Neuenfeldt, Secretary-Treasurer
DATE: May 19, 2009

RE: **SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 116**
Extends Family & Medical Leave to School-Related Activities

This legislation provides a much needed expansion of rights under Wisconsin's Family and Medical Leave Act to make it a bit easier for working parents to be involved in their children's education or monitor their care. It does not increase leave time allowed under the Act but does allow up to 16 hours in 12 months for parents to participate in school activities or monitor child care when it cannot be scheduled during non-working time. Research has shown that parental involvement is more important than family education level or income in determining a child's achievement level.

AB 116 would be the first improvement in Wisconsin's Family and Medical Leave Act since it passed in 1988. This is further evidence of the woefully inadequate pace in which employment policy and public policy are changing to address the realities of workers' lives. Given that most families have both parents in the workforce, and there are also many single-parent households, the right to take some minimal amount of time off from work to be involved in a child's education or care is more important than ever. We ask for your support.

PN/JR/mj:opeiu#9,afl-cio,dc

6333 West Blue Mound Road • Milwaukee, WI, 53213
Phone: 414-771-0700 • Fax: 414-771-1715
Web Site: www.wisaficio.org • E-Mail: Solidarity@wisaficio.org

CEO CHRONICLES

CEO CONFIDENCE INDEX

States	Average Position Change Per Year	Rank		GDP Growth Rank: Growth Rate (3-yr avg.)		Employment Rank: Unemployment Rate		Taxation & Regulation	Work Force Quality	Living Environment & Infrastructure
		'09	'08							
Best States										
Texas	N/C	1	1	7	8.19%	19	5.7%	A-	B+	B+
North Carolina	-1	2	3	10	7.18%	44	7.9%	B+	B+	A-
Florida	-7	3	10	15	6.55%	39	7.3%	B+	B-	B+
Worst States										
California	N/C	51	51	20	6.06%	48	8.4%	D	B-	B-
New York	N/C	50	50	11	7.16%	25	6.1%	D	B-	C-
Michigan	N/C	49	49	51	1.70%	51	9.6%	F	C+	C
Hot States (Greatest Rank Increase)										
Mississippi	15	30	45	33	5.00%	38	7.2%	F	C+	C
Pennsylvania	10	29	39	34	4.91%	25	6.1%	C	B-	B
Florida	7	3	10	15	6.55%	39	7.3%	B+	B-	B+
Cold States (Greatest Rank Decrease)										
Ohio	-11	45	34	49	3.24%	39	7.3%	C-	B-	B-
Minnesota	-10	32	22	39	4.50%	31	6.4%	C	B+	B+
Washington	-10	40	30	12	7.12%	31	6.4%	C	B+	B+

ment in this tough economic environment, the Best & Worst States survey saw a flurry of activity in the top ranks with the entry of three new states into the top five: Florida, Georgia and Tennessee. Tennessee, for example, enjoys one of the lowest cost of living indexes in

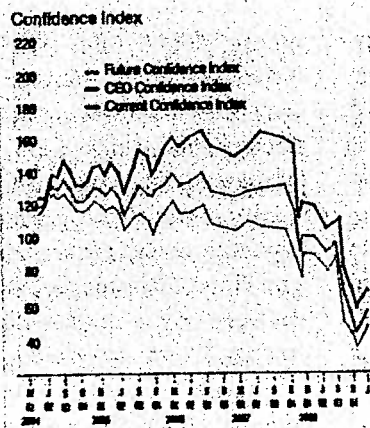
the U.S. California and New York rank among the highest. Texas maintained its #1 spot in the ranking for the fourth year in a row, as North Carolina, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee all jumped up in ranks, taking the #2, 3, 4 and 5 spots, respectively.

"Texas and the Carolinas are great for business," said one CEO. "South Carolina's Research Authority is exemplary in terms of creating new economic growth and Texas is strategically centered, has low taxes and outstanding demographics."

As a testament to this statement, in fiscal 2008, Texas' gross state product grew by 4.2 percent, compared to 1.9 percent for the national economy.

If there is one state where business leaders are agog at the anti-growth actions of its government it is California. Ten years ago the state budget strained at the seams at \$85 billion. This rose to \$100 billion under Gray Davis and is approaching \$130 billion under Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. During this time the Golden State experienced a net outmigration of people and businesses. Seemingly oblivious to economic reality, last year the Democratic-controlled legislature proposed to raise California's income tax rate to 12 percent, the highest in the nation. ▽

For complete results regarding the confidence of public- and private-company CEOs, please visit our full report at www.chiefexecutive.net.





WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Great Schools
benefit
Everyone!*

Testimony in Support of AB 116 before the Assembly Committee on Education May 19, 2009

*Companion to
SB 86.*

Thank you for allowing me to speak in support of Assembly Bill 116 and the proposed amendments to the Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act which would expand the law to include school conferences and activities. I'm Beth Oswald, and I have taught seventh grade world history at J. C. McKenna Middle School in Evansville, Wisconsin for the past thirteen years since graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Beloit College in 1995. I received my Master of Education and Professional Development degree from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse in 2003, and continued my education by completing a hands-on "Archaeology for Educators" program there. I have most recently begun work on my Doctorate in Educational Leadership through Walden University. Last year was an exciting one for me, for I was honored to serve as Wisconsin's State Teacher of the Year. As such, I believe I speak for all Wisconsin educators when I say I wholeheartedly support Assembly Bill 116, and believe it would do much to improve the educational system.

As an educator, I have found that as kids get older, parents become less involved with their children's education. This decline in involvement does not happen because parents *care* less about what happens at school, rather it occurs due to the nature of adolescents – they wish to be more independent, and therefore, tend to share less information about their school experience. For this reason, we have begun holding student led conferences, where kids share portfolios of their work along with academic and personal goals. Parents have been overwhelmingly positive about this style of conference, and state they enjoy seeing what their children are learning, hearing about their perceived strengths and weaknesses, and discussing their short and long-term goals. Having the student, parent(s), and teacher all sitting together discussing learning and its impact on the future of that young person is a very powerful thing. It sends a strong message that we are a team, united in helping that student be successful. Unfortunately, not all parents are able to attend these conferences due to their work schedules.

This problem is nothing new – there have always been a number of parents unable to attend conferences due to scheduling conflicts. This year only two of my 13 homeroom students' parents could not attend on conference night. Because of instances like this, our staff regularly arranges for conferences to be held at alternate times to accommodate parents' work schedules. And regardless of the fact that these rescheduled conferences usually occur on our own personal time – before school, after school or during our compensation time – we do so because we know the *value* of meeting face to face with our students' parents.

One of these valuable rescheduled conferences occurred last year for "Danny" and his adopted mom. Danny stated his mom could not attend on conference night. He thought (okay, he's a teenager, rather "hoped") that would be the end of it, but after many phone messages on both ends, I arranged for his conference to be held the next day during my compensated time. I'm glad we rescheduled, because after Danny shared his portfolio, his mom shared numerous concerns for, and insights into, her son. He has ADHD, I learned, and was already falling behind in some of his classes – so we arranged for him to check-out each day with me before leaving school to be sure he had all his homework, then do the same thing with his mom in the morning to be sure he had all he needed to be successful for the day. She also shared that he would be receiving counseling related to his mother's death and sibling issues, and asked me to share any changes in behavior or mood I, or any other seventh grade teachers, may observe so she could share this information with the counselor. Our 20-minute conference became nearly an hour – an hour that would not have happened had I not pushed for the conference to occur at a different time – and an hour that turned out to be tremendously beneficial in contributing to the success of a 12 year-old boy. I truly believe that without the face-to-face personal contact with Danny's mom, she would not have felt comfortable sharing this important personal information with me, and maybe would not have shared it at all.

In my experience, I have found that parents who attend conferences are more likely to initiate contact with their child's homeroom teacher with concerns about their child's academic *and* emotional well being – probably because they now have a comfort level with that staff member. These parents are also much more likely to respond in a positive manner when contacted regarding any concerns staff may have about their child, as they now see teachers as partners, rather than adversaries. Additionally, once parent teacher relationships are formed through contact at open house and conferences, parents tend to feel more comfortable attending school-day activities like our Toga and Medieval Days', or chaperoning field trips.

*Great Schools
benefit
Everyone!*

Such parent-staff-student relationships are difficult to develop and foster without initial, and continued, in-person meetings. Assembly Bill 116 would help these relationships occur, by giving employees the *right* to attend such valuable and vital school conferences and activities. And while we cannot mandate that parents attend their children's conferences and meetings, this bill would go a long way toward making it easier for parents who "wish they could attend," to actually do so.

For all of these reasons, please pass Assembly Bill 116. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Beth Oswald
3425 East Charley Bluff Road
Milton, WI 53563



WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Great Schools
benefit
Everyone!*

TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

FR: Wisconsin Education Association Council

DA: May 19, 2009

RE: AB 116 (School Conference and Activities Leave)

*Companion to
JB 86.*

The Wisconsin Education Association Council support Assembly Bill 116 allowing parents to take up to 16 hours of leave time from work to participate in children's school activities and conferences that cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours.

Parental involvement helps children to be successful in school. Parents are an important part of an education team which includes student, educators and communities working together for a brighter future. When parents are involved, their children achieve higher grades and test scores, develop better attitudes and behavior, attend school more regularly, complete more homework, graduate from high school and enroll in postsecondary education.

Great schools benefit everyone and making it easier for parents to get time off of work to attend teacher conferences and student activities will increase parental involvement and enhance children's chances for success in school.

According to the Education Commission of the States, at least 15 states encourage, urge, expect or direct employers to enable parents to attend school activities such as parent/teacher conferences: Alabama, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia. ¹

State	Enacted	Summary
Alabama	1994	Encourages the business community and governmental agencies to give administrative leave to parents for the purpose of parent-teacher conferences and involvement in other educational experiences of the child (ALA. ACTS 159).
California	1990	Prohibits employers with at least 25 employees from firing or in any way discriminating against an employee for taking off up to 40 hours each year to participate in school-related activities, subject to a limitation of eight hours in any calendar month. Employees must give reasonable notice to their employers and may be required to provide proof of attendance. Employees must utilize existing vacation, personal leave or compensatory time off, unless otherwise provided for by a collective bargaining agreement. An employee also may utilize time off without pay for this purpose. Employees discharged, threatened with discharge, demoted, suspended or in any other

¹ <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/59/11/5911.pdf>

Mary Bell, President

Dan Burkhalter, Executive Director



		manner discriminated against for taking time off to participate in school activities is entitled to reinstatement and reimbursement for lost wages and work benefits (CAL. LAB. CODE § 230.8).
Colorado	1996	Supports parental involvement in the public schools and encourages parents to visit their children's classrooms at least once a semester. Encourages businesses with more than 10 employees to allow each employee at least two hours per school semester to attend parent-teacher conferences, special presentations and school-related committees. Also encourages the recognition of businesses that show their commitments to children and education through their understanding of the importance of parental involvement (COLO. S.J.R. 15).
Hawaii	2003	Public employees are eligible for at least two hours of paid leave during normal business hours to attend parent-teacher conferences for K-12 students or parent-caregiver conferences for preschool-aged children. The leave will not be credited against vacation or sick time. The provision of paid leave must not adversely interfere with the operations of the workplace nor require the applicable agency to incur additional human resources or overtime costs. The employee may take no more than two conferences per child in a single calendar year and travel time is included as part of the two hours (HAW. REV. STAT. § 78-31).
Illinois	1993	An employer must grant up to eight hours leave during any school year for employees to attend school conferences or classroom activities related to their children if the conference or classroom activities cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. No leave may be taken unless the employee has exhausted all leave that may be granted, except sick and disability leave. The employee must provide the employer with a written request for leave at least seven days in advance. In emergency situations, no more than 24 hours notice is required. The employee must consult with the employer to schedule the leave so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employer. The employer is not required to issue paid leave (ILL. REV. STAT. CH 820 § 147/15).
Louisiana	1993	An employer may grant an employee leave from work of up to a total of 16 hours during any 12-month period to attend, observe or participate in conferences or classroom activities related to the employee's children that are conducted at the child's school or day care center, if the conferences or classroom activities cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. Employees must provide reasonable notice and make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to unduly disrupt the operations of the employer. An employer is not required to pay an employee for any time taken as leave. An employee is permitted to substitute any accrued vacation time or other appropriate paid leave (LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 1015.2).
Minnesota	1990 (last	An employer must grant an employee leave of up to a total of 16 hours



	amended 2003)	during any 12-month period to attend school conferences or school-related activities related to the employee's child, provided they cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. When the need for the leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide reasonable prior notice and make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to unduly disrupt the operations of the employer. An employer is not required to grant paid leave, although an employee may substitute any accrued appropriate paid leave (MINN. STAT. ANN. § 181.9412).
North Carolina	1993	Allows four hours unpaid leave per year to any employee who is a parent or guardian of a school-aged child so that the employee may attend or otherwise be involved at that child's school. The leave must be at a mutually agreed upon time between the employer and the employee and the employer may require an employee to provide a written request for the leave at least 48 hours before the time desired for the leave. The employer may also require that the employee furnish written verification from the child's school that the employee attended or was otherwise involved at that school during the time of the leave (N.C. GEN. STAT. § 95-28.3).
Oklahoma	1989	Directs the state board to establish a program encouraging private employers to give employees leave to attend parent-teacher conferences at least once each semester. Also directs the state board to require school boards to develop initiatives promoting schools as congenial places for parents to visit. Establishes state board policy to encourage public schools to explore outreach opportunities (OKLA. STAT. TIT. 70 § 10-105.2).
Oregon	1995	The state legislature recommends that (1) school districts provide opportunities for parents or guardians to be involved in establishing and implementing educational goals and to participate in decision-making at the school site, (2) employers recognize the need for parents or guardians and members of the community to participate in the education process not only for their own children but for the educational system, (3) <i>employers be encouraged to extend appropriate leave to parents or guardians to allow greater participation in that process during school hours</i> , (4) school districts enter into partnerships with business, labor and other groups to provide workplace-based professional development opportunities for their educational staff and (5) school districts enter into partnerships with recreation groups, faith-based organizations, social service and health care agencies, businesses, child care providers and other groups that support children and families to create community learning centers for students, parents and members of the surrounding community (OR. REV. STAT. § 329.125).
South Carolina	2000	The education oversight committee, in cooperation with representatives of the department of commerce, the department of revenue, and the South Carolina chamber of commerce, will develop recommendations for employer tax credits as incentives to: (1) <i>provide parent-employee release time for parent-teacher conferences or</i>

*Great Schools
benefit
Everyone!*



		<i>attendance at their children's academic-related events without loss of pay and (2) develop workplace policies which enable parents to improve their literacy, assist their children with academics, and become more involved in their child's education as a result of employers working with local school officials (S.C. CODE ANN. § 59-28-220).</i>
Tennessee	2000	Urges employers to excuse employees from work to attend parent-teacher conferences when given 24-hour notice (TENN. H.J.R. 56)
Texas	1997 (renumbered 1999, amended 2003)	Employees may use up to eight hours of sick leave each fiscal year to attend parent-teacher conferences for their children in grades K-12. An employee must give reasonable advance notice to their employer (TEX. EDUC. CODE ANN. § 661.206).
Utah	1996 (amended 2000)	Recognizing the importance of parental participation in the educational process, it is state policy to encourage parents to provide a home environment that values education and send their children to school prepared to learn, rely upon school districts and schools to provide opportunities for parents of students to be involved in establishing and implementing educational goals and <i>expect employers to recognize the need for parents and members of the community to participate in the public education system in order to help students achieve and maintain excellence.</i> Local school boards must adopt policies on parental involvement. Policies must provide parents with the opportunity to be actively involved in their child's education and inform them of the importance of their involvement in directly affecting the educational success of their child (UTAH CODE ANN. § 53A-1A-105).
West Virginia	1990 (last amended 2003)	Establishes local school improvement councils at every school. School improvement councils may receive school of excellence awards and competitive grant awards and expend such grants. In order to promote innovations and improvements at the school, a school improvement council will receive cooperation from the school in implementing policies and programs it may adopt for a number of purposes, including to encourage the involvement of parents or guardians in their child's educational process and in the school <i>or to encourage businesses to provide time for their employees to meet with teachers concerning their child's education</i> (W. VA. CODE § 18-5A-2).

Please support Assembly Bill 116.

If you have any questions, contact Deb Sybell, WEAC Legislative Program Coordinator, at (608) 298-2327.







WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TESTIMONY REGARDING ASSEMBLY BILL 116: SCHOOL CONFERENCE LEAVE

Presented by John Huebscher, Executive Director

May 19, 2009

companion to
SB 86.

On behalf of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, I strongly urge you to support Assembly Bill 116, which allows employees to take leave from work to attend a child's day care or school function.

By allowing parents the flexibility to attend important school functions and to play a direct role in the daily instruction of their children, AB 116 would facilitate an essential element of successful education, parental involvement. In his 1981 encyclical letter, *On Human Work*, Pope John Paul II discussed the relationship between work and family life at some length. In his discussion the Pope said the following:

"These two spheres of values—one linked to work and the other consequent on the family nature of human life—must be properly united and must properly permeate each other... Two aspects of work in a sense come into play here: the one making family life and its upkeep possible, and the second making possible the achievement of the purposes of the family, especially education." (#11)

The Pope continued by stating that work itself should be:

"organized and adapted in such a way as to respect the requirements of the person, and his or her forms of life, above all life in the home." (#19)

These ideas are echoed by the Catholic bishops of the United States in their pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, and in their 1992 statement, "Putting Children and Families First." The American bishops have emphasized that the true measure of an economy is not just what it produces but whether or not it protects human dignity and promotes family life. Giving employees time off to attend to their children's educational needs does just that.

As the bishops reflected in *Economic Justice for All*, "economic and social policies of the work world should be continually evaluated in light of their impact on the strength and stability of family life," (#93). The well-being of families is a proper concern for government and public authorities. In several ways, the political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it, and to ensure that a variety of goods are available to families in order to meet their responsibilities to one another and the broader community.

Over

AB 116 is consistent with these values. It affirms and encourages parents to be more involved in the education of their children by being present at school for significant events in the educational life of their child. By restructuring the workplace to make room for school visits, the bill represents a commitment by the rest of us as "indirect employers" to support parents in their roles as primary educators.

By allowing parents to attend and participate in school and day care activities, we affirm our commitment to make the family an integral part of education in the State of Wisconsin.

The WCC urges your support for AB 116.