

## GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

April 8, 2022

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing **Assembly Bill 888** in its entirety.

The bill would require the Governor to allocate \$10 million in federal funding received under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to fund talent attraction and retention initiatives focusing on veterans. The bill also requires WEDC to expend those funds allocated by the Governor for this purpose.

My administration has been working diligently to make meaningful investments in our workforce, including support for our veterans in our workforce. I announced in July 2021 an investment of \$130 million into solutions to help address our state's long-term workforce challenges. This investment included \$100 million to develop innovative, community-based solutions to supporting our workforce, apprenticeship, and work training, \$20 million toward subsidizing employment and skills training for individuals who are unemployed, and \$10 million to help connect workers with available jobs. Today, much of this investment has already been awarded to important projects and efforts in every corner of our state.

We have also worked to provide additional federal funds to invest in veteran-owned businesses and their economic recovery through the Diverse Business Assistance Grant Program. This program, which I created to assist small businesses in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, provided, among other investments, nearly \$5 million toward the Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce and CRC Employment and Entrepreneurial Services—both organizations that serve veterans and veteran-owned businesses by providing educational programming, computer literacy, technical assistance, and other benefits for new business owners.

I also recently announced over half a million dollars in grants to 14 registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that provide financial assistance, entrepreneurship training, or other services to Wisconsin veterans and their families. Since starting in 2015, the WDVA's grant programs have awarded more than \$1.7 million in funding to organizations that have a goal of ensuring Wisconsin veterans and their families are properly cared for, and more than \$2.2 million in funding to non-profit organizations that provide entrepreneurship or technical, business, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to the Legislature attempting to limit the state's ability to use federal funds. It is the governor's role to oversee the use of federal funds under Wisconsin State Statutes Section 16.54.

I remain committed to the work my administration has already been doing to ensure our veterans have the resources and support they deserve. I recently announced Blue Ribbon Commission on Veteran Opportunity will examine issues related to veteran employment and training, among other topics supporting veteran success. As Wisconsin's economic recovery from the pandemic continues, my administration remains committed to further efforts aimed at strengthening businesses and our workforce. We will continue our effort to bolster collaboration with Wisconsin's veterans, strengthen the network of veterans organizations working to provide care and assistance, and find long-term solutions to support our state's and our country's heroes and the challenges they face—both those that existed before the pandemic and others that worsened because of it.

Respectfully submitted,  
*TONY EVERS*  
Governor