



State Senator
Rick Gudex

District 18

February 17, 2016

To: The Senate Committee on Economic Development and Commerce
From: Sen. Rick Gudex
Re: Senate Bill 696

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for hearing this bill today. The Second Chance Bill, as we've called it, will allow DWD and other organizations with career opportunities to market those opportunities to former UW students who are no longer attending school.

We first got this idea in a conversation with a professional organization, who mentioned to us that they do have entry level openings in their industry – good paying jobs that can lead to excellent careers – but they can't find enough applicants who can meet a few basic requirements. And when I say basic, I mean simply being able to read and write at an acceptable level; have a valid driver's license; and pass a drug test.

They noted that most college students can generally meet all these requirements, and they would love to market their opportunities directly to former students who have decided that a 4-year degree isn't for them.

So we introduced SB 696. Under this bill, UW schools will send DWD a list of those students who were attending school last semester, but not this semester. DWD will then be able to send those students a packet of materials on programs available, including opportunities that might be unique to the student's part of the state.

Further, DWD will be able to include materials from private organizations, like the one that first brought this idea to our attention, about opportunities they might have.

The bill includes some limits on private organizations making use of this: first, it's limited to those groups who are providing training through an apprenticeship program or through a technical college. Second, a private organization will have to pay a proportional share of the cost of the mailing. These requirements will limit the number of organizations taking part and will prevent an administration from making subjective decisions on who can and cannot take part.

With this bill, we are not trying to diminish the value of a college education. But we know that a four year degree isn't the right answer for everyone. Needing a second try isn't unusual – a lot of students have started down one path only to find that it wasn't right for them. But once they've made one false start (which plenty have done), how do they know what to try next? How does a young person find out what opportunities are available to them? This bill seeks to answer that question.

Thank you for your attention to this bill, and I urge your support.