



DAN FEYEN

STATE SENATOR

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To: The Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Military Issues, & Senior Affairs

From: Sen. Dan Feyen

Re: Senate Bill 689

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing today.

We all know Wisconsin has a worker shortage. Wisconsin has reached record unemployment this year, with some counties having rates as low as 2.1%. Businesses regularly report difficulties finding employees to fill positions.

However, with this challenge comes a great opportunity to explore opportunities to support populations that have been historically underemployed. Senate Bill 689 seeks to better the systems we use to support disabled individuals in the workplace by allowing for integrated, co-worker support.

This legislation is based off of a pilot program that occurred in select counties throughout Wisconsin, including Dane County. It is noteworthy that by utilizing this model Dane County has achieved a greater than 70% disability employment rate in contrast to the statewide average of less than 10%. By training coworkers within businesses to offer supports to disabled individuals, the Partners with Business disability employment model reduces or eliminates the need for an outside job coach to be present in a private employer's facility. This reduces the cost of supporting a disabled individual and has proven to still deliver a satisfactory work experience for the employee and employer. I have distributed a document that breaks down the cost-savings and provides more details on the pilot program to each committee member.

Senate Bill 689 provides a \$75,000 appropriation in fiscal year 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, totaling \$150,000, to the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities to scale the Partners with Business program to a state-wide model. While this may seem like a hefty monetary sum on the front end, I am confident that the cost savings and the improved employment outcomes associated with this model make this a worthy investment for the state.

Thank you for your time today. I welcome any questions you may have.

Testing Partners with Business Statewide: A Successful and Efficient Model for Employing People with Disabilities

Dane County has achieved a much higher community employment rate for people with the most significant disabilities than other Wisconsin counties (over 70% versus less than 10%). This is, in part, due to the relationships that been developed with local employers through the successful implementation of the Partners with Business model of workplace supports. Can the Partners with Business model be expanded to improve employment rates for people with disabilities throughout Wisconsin?

In February 2017, the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities partnered with one high school and three non-profit organizations to establish and “test” the Partners with Business support model with twenty employers in Wisconsin. These collaborators, located in DeForest, Madison, Milwaukee and Hudson, represent a mix of Wisconsin’s urban, rural, and suburban communities. After just a few short months, we are seeing promising results, which could be replicated and expanded upon with further investment and technical assistance. Specifically, the technical assistance structure and time-limited investment included in LRB-1527 could help to scale the Partners with Business model statewide.

Case Examples:

DeForest High School has developed Partners with Business relationships to support 5 students working for 6 employers. The employers include Walmart, All Stop, Rejuvenation Spa, A Growing Place Preschool, Kohls and Yahara Learning Center.

Four of the five students are being supported naturally by co-workers, with no reimbursement to the business from the school, vocational rehabilitation or long-term care program. The school staff check in with the business 1-2 times per month. These “natural” workplace supports from co-workers ***cost nothing*** for the public system (i.e. Schools, Vocational Rehabilitation and Medicaid). They are a result of the coaching and technical assistance the Partners with Business service provider has given the business to prepare the supervisors and co-workers to successfully employ and support a worker with disabilities.



Partners with Business Technical Assistance to Employers results in more natural supports on the job, ***which costs the public system nothing.***

Another student, Sophie, who was hired to work 40 hours per week at the Yahara Learning Center, is supported using another form of Partners with Business supports - called **Partners with Business Plus**. In this situation, the Partners with Business service provider (DeForest High School) worked with the employer to maximize natural supports from the supervisor and coworkers, which costs the state nothing. Because Sophie will need some extra support and coaching on the job – beyond what is typically provided by co-workers – the business is provided a reimbursement for co-workers to step in for short periods of time to provide her with the extra help needed. Regular check-in and back-up services from Partners with Business agency are available to ensure Sophie’s ongoing success. Without using the Partners with Business Plus model, the ongoing job supports for this student would cost the public system more. The chart below demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of the Partners with Business approach.

Traditional Agency or School Supports		Partners with Business Plus	
Number of job coaching hours per week (4x1 hour plus 30 minutes for transportation per visit)	6 hours	Co-worker paid supports needed per week	4 hours
Cost for job coach per hour	\$15 per hour plus benefits	Cost for employer to provide co-worker supports	\$15 per hour
Total weekly costs for job support	\$ 90 per week plus benefits	Total weekly reimbursement to employer for co-worker supports ¹	\$60 per week
Total annual support costs (37 weeks of employment) *	\$3,330 + benefits	Total annual support costs (37 weeks of employment) *	\$2,220

*July 31, 2017 to June 8, 2018

Savings to the Public System with Partners with Business Plus = over \$1100 per year

¹ School funds are used to provide the reimbursement to the employer

Jolly, Marie

From: Lisa Pugh <Pugh@TheArc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 9:54 AM
To: Jolly, Marie; Lakin, Tim; Bures, Nicholas
Cc: Lisa Pugh
Subject: What funds can be used for in SB 689 - Partners with Business

Importance: High

Hello -

I know that your bosses will be testifying today on SB 689, the Partners with Business bill. You may get questions on what the funding in the PWB bill would pay for. The bill does not describe this in detail as a lot of the funds will be put out to grantees (like private businesses) in a request for proposals, but there is a general answer.

The amount is \$75,000/year for two years: total of \$150,000
Two major categories for use of funds:

- 1) Administration/Coordination/Technical Assistance to grantees and others interested in hiring people with disabilities and
- 2) Grants to Partners with Business Providers

The funds will be used in a demonstration project to create and sustain capacity of Wisconsin businesses to hire, train, and retain workers with the most significant disabilities. \$25,000 in grants to businesses (estimated \$2,000/business) and \$50,000 in training, equipping and supporting businesses, schools, and vocational agencies with a minimum of 50 additional individuals with significant disabilities hired and supported internally by their employer.)

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) will use funds related to developing the program for:

- Coaching materials development
- Awareness campaign and related materials
- Staff time for travel and meetings with interested businesses, etc.
- Collaboration time with state agencies, including DPI
- Writing, reviewing and issuing an RFP to grantees
- Monitoring, visiting and coaching RFP awardees (approximately 10)
- Associated travel and other costs to provide face-to-face coaching to grantees statewide
- Develop reporting mechanisms for grantees; support reporting of data
- Analyze and summarize data for two years of grant
- Issue final summary report

Grantees will receive funds through an RFP process to cover:

- Expenses related to participating in coaching (details will be outlined in the RFP)
- Expenses likely to include: staff time, travel, materials development, community events, training related costs
- Expenses related to keeping and analyzing project data and issuing a final report

Thank you for championing this bill!



The Arc Wisconsin
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Lisa Pugh, State Director
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arcwi.org

January 17, 2018

To: Senator Testin, Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Military Affairs
and Senior Issues

From: Lisa Pugh, Executive Director

Re: Senate Bill 689, Partners with Business

Position: Support SB 689

The Arc Wisconsin is a statewide organization that advocates for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). We have 15 local chapters across the state including in Fond du Lac, Green, Iowa and Columbia Counties, where several members of this committee are from.

Thank you to all co-sponsors, but particularly to Senator Feyen as a lead author and champion of this bill. We know that Lakeland Care District, a Family Care Managed Care Organization in the Fond du Lac area, is committed to getting more people with disabilities employed and is eager to be part of the Partners with Business model going forward.

This is a bill that literally can help businesses and workers with disabilities in all areas of the state.

Our colleagues in Dane County are leading the nation with this model of employment supports for people with disabilities. They have proven that the Partners with Business bill:

1. Is a Win for Businesses: it gets them reliable workers and increases their productivity;
2. Provides supports for workers with disabilities that are effective and business friendly;
3. Saves scarce Government resources; in Dane County alone the model saves an estimated 50% when compared to traditional government supports provided to a worker with a disability.

The point about saving government resources is key here because in this building we hear all the time that Medicaid costs too much. Partners with Business is a tried and true cost-

savings solution that gets people to work earning money and paying taxes as well as reduces their need for government funded employment supports.

I have met many workers with disabilities and employers who are successfully using Partners with Business. Russell is a friend of mine who works in an office. He started out with a job coach trying to support him; that job coach had no computer skills and could not even work the copier. Sometimes the job coaches would have to leave early or would come late. This was not helpful as Russell was trying to learn his job and become an effective worker. It was not helping the business get their work done. Russell's employer decided to try Partners with Business which helps a co-worker learn how to naturally coach an employee with disabilities. After some initial support for the business and co-worker to learn how to make accommodations and provide reminders that Russell could follow, he became one of the businesses most reliable workers and has developed a great friendship with his colleague coach. Russell would have been eligible for ongoing government funded daily job coaching, but that is no longer necessary. His supports have been reduced to an occasional check in every few months.

This bill will provide the support to allow more Wisconsin businesses to learn what Russell's employer has learned and help both the employer and employee to be successful.

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities has funded small Partners with Business projects statewide to test the model and collect important data. They have developed the expertise and have proven that Partners with Business can work with all sorts of employers in rural, suburban and urban communities across Wisconsin.

The goal of this bill is to allow any willing entity - including private businesses, schools, Family Care care management organizations, IRIS agencies, and employment services providers - to be coached in this model and support more hiring of people with disabilities.

The bill will expand awareness and competence across the private sector in hiring individuals with significant disabilities, who are often those who cost the most to support in our public system of long-term care. Dane County has proven that these individuals can be employed and earn typical wages that help them contribute to their own care and often pay taxes.

The best part of this bill is there is accountability to success. There is required reporting on the number of people with disabilities hired, their wages and hours worked, with an expectation that the project will result in a reduction in public spending on government funded employment supports by a minimum of 25 percent compared to traditional costs.

This bill is a great example of public-private partnership and how government supports can work more effectively for people. The Arc Wisconsin hopes you will support this legislation!



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

P.O. Box 7222, Madison, Wisconsin 53707

DATE: January 17, 2018

To: Senator Testin and members of the Senate Committee on Workforce
FROM: Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations
RE: Support for Senate Bill 689, Partners with Business employment

The Survival Coalition of more than 30 disability organizations strongly supports Senate Bill 689 as a practical and effective approach for addressing three challenges facing Wisconsin: 1. Addressing the skills gap for Wisconsin employers across all sectors; 2. Reducing the challenge of unemployment and under-employment for people with disabilities, particularly those with the most significant disabilities; and 3. Addressing the need for direct support workers, which is a chronic need both in Wisconsin and nationwide.

Job growth forecasts for Wisconsin show new job opportunities in the areas of skilled trades, manufacturing, and construction. A talent shortage is among the top 10 critical human capital issues reported by companies nationally, along with a priority to improve the productivity of the workforce. At the same time, people with disabilities, including youth, remain an untapped workforce whose increased participation in the labor market, if properly trained, could have a significant positive impact on Wisconsin's overall economy.

People with disabilities represent 9% of Wisconsin's workforce; yet their employment rate is less than a third the rate for workers without disabilities. Even though 80% of people with disabilities say they want to work or want to work more hours, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in October 2017, only 21% have jobs, compared to 68.3% of people without disabilities. The complete lack of participation in the workforce by people with disabilities (71%) is even more shocking than the unemployment rate. For Wisconsinites with the most significant disabilities – those who qualify for and require some level of publicly funded long-term supports for daily living – the employment rates hover at just 9% for working age adults. Many of these people with disabilities want to work and businesses indicate they are interested in hiring, yet no one is making the connection.

And finally, finding, hiring and retaining direct support workers, including job coaches, is a constant struggle both statewide and nationally. A Survival Coalition survey of nearly 1,000 people with long-term care needs found more than 95% have trouble finding qualified workers. Nearly half (45%) reported having direct support workers miss 7 or more shifts in the previous month.

The Partners with Business model helps an employer understand how to embed and support an employee with a disability within the workplace, with the support of a co-worker as necessary, thus reducing reliance on outside direct support workers. Some existing public funding streams will reimburse the employer who enhances the wage and responsibilities of that “job coach” employee. Partners with Business is a cost-effective model that is less intrusive to the employer’s flow of business (there are limited outside providers coming in to support the employee with a disability) and helps the employee with a disability acclimate to the job setting and culture by learning directly from a peer colleague.

Survival Coalition sees this approach as a win-win-win for all in Wisconsin, and a wise investment in public dollars. We hope it can be passed into law quickly.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this legislation. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Survival Co-Chairs:

Maureen Ryan, moryan@charter.net; (608) 444-3842;
Beth Swedeen, beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-1166;
Kristin M. Kerschensteiner, kitk@drwi.org; (608) 267-0214;
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Survival Coalition Issue Teams: education, employment, housing, long term care for adults, long term care for children, mental health, transportation, workforce, voting, Medicaid and health care.

Real Lives, Real Work, Real Smart, Wisconsin
Investing in People with Disabilities

What's in the bill: SB 689

- **Senate Bill 689 – The Partners with Business Bill requires the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities to expand their unique Partners with Business coaching program for the hiring of individuals with disabilities.**
- **“Coaching,” under this bill, is providing specific, targeted supports to a business, school district, or vocational agency that demonstrates how coworkers can provide the support an employee with a disability needs, over time eliminating the need for a professional job coach or other individual (typically funded by the government) from outside of the employer.**
- **The two-year technical assistance investment will result in packaging the Partners with Business model and providing small planning grants to Wisconsin businesses and providers that are interested in building workplace supports that increase the employability of Medicaid-eligible individuals, including enrollees in Family Care and IRIS programs.**
- **The bill requires reporting on various items, including wages earned, hours worked, and the reduction in public spending on employment supports for the individuals with disabilities participating in the project by a minimum of 25 percent.**

Other talking points about the Success of Partners with Business:

- **People with disabilities want to work and employers want to hire these dependable, capable workers, but often the supports the employee and employer need to get started are not there. A business does not know where to turn.**
- **Partners with Business is a model that has worked successfully in Dane County and other communities statewide to support private industry to build their capacity to hire workers with disabilities.**
- **The Partners with Business model supports an employer to enhance the responsibility (and sometimes even the wage) of an existing employee who then, after he or she is trained as needed, provides ongoing, basic job supports to the employee with a disability.**
- **Partners with Business is a cost-effective model that is less intrusive to the flow of business than bringing in an outside provider and helps the employee with a disability acclimate to the job setting and culture by learning directly from a peer colleague.**
- **Over the last five years, Dane County has used the Partners with Business model at 25 businesses of varying size with a reported cost-savings to government totaling up to 50% when compared to traditional employment supports.**
- **Recent work by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) to expand Partners with Business into other communities (representing a mix of Wisconsin's urban, rural, and suburban areas) has also shown great success. Targeted, expert technical assistance has resulted in employment supports that costs significantly less than traditional government-funded programming.**
- **This model solves several problems: addresses the shortage of (quality) job coaches statewide; meets the need of businesses that want job supports that are less intrusive; reduced costs to public programs; gives businesses the confidence to hire more workers with disabilities; brings in an untapped labor pool during a time when employers are in need of skilled labor; provides employers with reliable workers who want to work.**

SB689

**Abigail Tessmann
409 N Eau Claire Ave #110
Madison WI 53705
tessmannabigail@yahoo.com
920 253 6345**

Dear legislature,

I urge you to vote in favor of this SB689 bill.

My name is Abigail Tessmann,

I have Cerebral Palsy and I currently am working in MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT as an after-school group leader. While in school (growing up): I remember having adults or college students coming to class with me to assist me with my studies, speech and language and physical therapy in the classroom. As an adult: I rely on job coaches to assist me while at work when I need it - as I work best, when shown how to do something once or twice first with a modified step-by-step instruction. Every few months my boss, gives staff evaluations and with the aid/support I receive from my job coach in a work setting; I'm doing great.

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Military Affairs
and Senior Issues.
From: Anna Halverson
Date: January 17, 2018
Re: Senate Bill 689

My name is Anna Halverson and I am a transition coordinator with Progressive Community Services, a non-profit agency in Dane County. I help students with developmental disabilities transition from school environments to the workforce. For the past two years, part of my job has been as the Partners with Business Consultant, helping teachers and vocational agencies implement the model.

To make the case for Senate Bill 689, I could talk about the cost-effectiveness of the Partners with Business model—that a Partners with Business model often costs publicly funded program 50% less than a traditional supported employment model. I could also talk about how Partners with Business encourages inclusivity and diversity in the work place and embodies the best practices in my field—people with disabilities being supported in the least restrictive environments. Instead, though, I would like to focus on my experience with employers.

One of my concerns when first starting as the Partners with Business consultant is that businesses would see this as too much hassle. I was quickly relieved of this concern. The overwhelming majority of the employers that I have worked with have not only been interested in the model, but enthusiastic. Employers know their businesses and their employees better than anyone, and they also know what makes sense. They are often able to identify logistical concerns in setting up the model, and bring those concerns to the rest of the team to problem-solve. Many employers seem to enjoy the collaborative process necessary to develop unique Partners with Business plans, individualized not only to the employee with a disability but also to the business.

Employers across a variety of businesses have expressed to me that they see this coworker model of support as an investment in their employees—an opportunity to retain their capable, reliable workers with disabilities with a reduced amount of outside support. Employers have also told me that having coworkers provide support contributes to an atmosphere of positivity and productivity in the workplace. We all know that there is no better feeling than taking pride in your work and a job well done. That is what Partners with Business is all about for workers with disabilities and for their coworkers.

As the Partners with Business Consultant, I learned something that surprised me. I learned that the barrier to enhancing natural supports for workers with disabilities is rarely an employer's willingness, but instead a lack of know-how, of technical assistance, and of opportunity. Since 2008, Dane County has used the Partners with Business model in over 40 diverse businesses. We have saved Medicaid-funded programs tens of thousands of dollars by empowering coworkers to provide support. Senate Bill 689 will allow this model to expand to other parts of the state where keying in to the often-untapped workforce of people with disabilities could be a game-changer. In my experience, this legislation will add value to the state and I strongly encourage you to vote yes. It's a win for businesses, a win for people with disabilities, and a win for Wisconsin.

To: Senator Patrick Testin, Chair, Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Military Affairs, and Senior Issues

Members, Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Military Affairs, and Senior Issues

From: Disability Rights Wisconsin, Amy Devine, Public Policy Coordinator

Date: January 17, 2018

Re: Testimony in support of SB 689, employment of individuals with disabilities enrolled in long-term care programs and making an appropriation

Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) is the designated Protection and Advocacy system for Wisconsinites with disabilities. DRW is charged with protecting and enforcing the legal rights of individuals with disabilities, investigating systemic abuse and neglect, and ensuring access to supports and services so that all Wisconsinites can learn, work, and live full lives in our communities free of abuse, neglect, and discrimination.

DRW supports SB 689 and the Partners with Business model as this model will help people with disabilities maintain jobs with natural supports in their employment. This bill will support the Partners with Business model, a model that is already working in various parts of the state, and which can help train and support employers better support their employees. You will hear from several employers today talk about how this model is working for them and how they want to not only just hire people with disabilities but also support and retain them as employees. Schools and transition programs are also working hard across the state to develop good relationships with employers in their community and this bill will build upon the work already being done there. Disability Rights Wisconsin supports this bill because it will expand opportunities for people with disabilities to maintain steady employment and will help expand this program to other parts of the state for people with disabilities.

Maintaining Employment

Unfortunately, unemployment rates for people with disabilities remain high. As of December 2017, the labor force participation rate for all people with disabilities is 21% while the rate for people without disabilities is 68%. It is our hope this bill will increase employment for people with disabilities.

Many people with disabilities utilize job coaches in their places of employment. Job coaching supports are frequently required by people with disabilities in order to start a job successfully and to have enough time with that coach to establish the client's work routine and tasks. As time

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disabilityrightswi.org

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goes on, usually after about 90 days, the coach moves on to help another person. This leaves the previous client without supports after the 90 days of coaching end.

We often see people with disabilities lose jobs under two typical scenarios once they no longer have a job coach. First, the employee will often have new tasks assigned to them but without the supports on the job to learn those new skills. Second, a new manager or supervisor is hired and may require the individual to perform tasks in a different way. However, there is no one trained to work with the employee with a disability on how to perform these tasks differently. Without these supports, the employee with a disability loses their job.

Workforce Shortage

Job coaches are necessary but not always available, even though job coaches work weekdays, nights, and weekends. Especially in rural parts of the state, we hear that there are not enough people to fill these positions, and the demand for job coaches often outpaces their availability. For example, we received a call last Thursday from a gentleman who had just met with his DVR counselor. He was there to arrange for a job coach for the job he just found for himself. The job started Saturday. There was some doubt that the DVR counselor could find an available job coach at short notice on a Saturday. The client was very fearful that the job would end before it started. We receive these calls fairly frequently: there is a willing employer and good match for an employee, but the person can't take the job just because they simply cannot find a reliable job coach.

If employers had some employees who could assist a person to learn a new job skill or to help with communication in general, employees with disabilities are more likely to retain employment. This would end the revolving door of unemployment, followed by months of trying to find a good job match for the person with a disability, followed by 90 days of coaching, and then possibly followed by that individual losing a job if they are not supported.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this legislation. We believe that SB 689 will build upon the work already being done in Wisconsin to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

MADISON	MILWAUKEE	RICE LAKE	
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January 17, 2018

Dear Senate Committee and Business Members:

My name is Ramsey Lee, and I am from Hudson, Wisconsin. I am writing in support of the Partners with Business Bill. Employment is a gift that many of us desire, and everyone has unique individual gifts and talents to contribute to society. Everyone can work in a job if it matches his or her unique strengths and abilities and they are provided with the appropriate support.

In order to make informed choices, people with disabilities and their families need accurate information, and this Partners with Business Bill is a great start and should be used as a milestone for the state. Therefore, I think that the Partners with Business Bill is crucial for advancing the independence, productivity and quality of life for all citizens throughout Wisconsin.

Working has always been a passion of mine, and I hope to help advance the workforce. This Partners with Business Bill would benefit everyone.

Sincerely,

Ramsey Lee
1100 St. Croix Heights
Hudson, WI 54016

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Military Affairs and Senior Issues

Re: Senate Bill 689

Submitted by: Shannon Webb, Associate with inControl Wisconsin, Inc.

Over the past two years, in my role as an Associate for inControl Wisconsin, Inc, a non-profit dedicated to expanding best practices for integrated employment and long-term care supports, I have been involved in outreach and technical assistance for the 'Partners with Business' support model with vocational support agencies, schools, Family Care Managed Care Organizations, IRIS Consultant Agencies, and businesses.

The Partners with Business (PWB) model is a cost-effective way to support individuals with disabilities so they can be successful on the job by educating employers and coworkers about people with disabilities and working with them to maximize the training and on-the-job support for employees with disabilities.

I'd like to tell you a PWB success story about a young woman named Sophie and her employer, Yahara River Learning Center. Sophie is a student at DeForest High School. Her career goal is to work full-time as a lead childcare teacher. After obtaining experience as a volunteer and attending a childcare class at Madison College, she was hired last summer to work full-time as a teaching assistant at Yahara River Learning Center in DeForest. To set Sophie up for success, the Transition Coordinator at the high school negotiated PWB supports with the childcare center.

My role was to provide training and technical assistance to the high school staff on developing PWB supports with local employers. After learning about the PWB model, the high school staff worked directly with the employer to determine when and how Sophie would need support at work, identify co-workers who could provide that support, and educate the supervisor and co-workers so they could successfully provide the support to Sophie.

Sophie was paired with a lead teacher, Katie. Katie and Sophie work in tandem like any lead and assistant teacher would, however, Katie goes above and beyond that typical role to mentor Sophie toward becoming a lead teacher, as well as guide her on soft-skill development, help her problem solve, and help her navigate social and emotional situations at work. Katie is also going to be Sophie's tutor while she completes the second class at Madison College for her child care license.

For the extra support Katie provides, the business is reimbursed by the school. This arrangement saves the government over \$1,100 per year. For Sophie, this kind of support is less stigmatizing than having a coach from the high school or an outside agency with her at work and the childcare center directors don't have the extra worry of unfamiliar coaches coming into the center.

With the PWB model natural supports are identified and developed from the very beginning of a person's job. The PWB model:

- decreases overall cost to support individuals in community jobs;
- minimizes formal coaching supports provided by vocational agencies (which receive government funding);
- eliminates inefficiencies such as mileage costs & travel time for government funded coaches to drive around to different businesses to “check on” or support people for short times during their work shift;
- creates opportunities for vocational agencies to serve more people in community jobs and increase service provider capacity;
- Supports more job development in rural areas where attracting direct-care workers is particularly difficult; and
- helps people with disabilities be more integrated into the workforce by fostering relationships with managers and coworkers just like everyone else.

Some of the outcomes I have observed in my work with the PWB model include:

- In a recent pilot project to test the cost-effectiveness of the model in Managed Care, Goodwill and My Choice MCO identified five individuals at Planet Fitness, YMCA, Pizza Shuttle, Pick ‘n Save, and Marshalls. Using PWB reduced on-the-job long-term support costs for these five individuals by approximately 50%.
- The on-the-job support costs for two young men, Aaron and Ross, who work at CampCreatability in Monona doing video editing and digital imaging cost the long-term care system \$5,600 per person per year, whereas traditional job coach agency supports would have cost more than \$8,000 per person per year.
- As a result of PWB technical assistance, Bridge for Community Life in Hudson (an employment service provider funded through programs like Family Care and IRIS or DVR) increased their ability to fade publicly funded employment supports at job sites. They have been successful in transitioning people with disabilities to 100% natural on-the-job supports at work. This costs the public system nothing.

In addition to cost savings, the PWB model has the potential to address our Supported Employment service capacity issues in Wisconsin. Vocational support agencies are affected by the direct-care worker crisis. This crisis, coupled with low pay rates and historically low unemployment rates, makes hiring and retaining job coaches extremely difficult. Reducing support costs means reducing the time a coach is tied-up at a job site. With the right education and support to utilize the PWB model, businesses can be in a position to provide more on-the-job supports to employees with disabilities and agencies can use their job coaching resources to expand the number of people with disabilities in competitive integrated employment.

Dear Senate Committee on Work Force Development:

I am submitting this as Public Testimony asking you to please support The Partners with Business Project.

People with disabilities are a tremendous, untapped sector of workers in our state. People with disabilities comprise 20% of the population. 80% of people with disabilities want to work. Only 21% of people with disabilities have jobs, while 68% of people without disabilities are employed

People with disabilities have made great strides in being involved in the communities in which they live. They are shoppers, parents, motivated workers

People with disabilities create a diverse workplace and their presence serve As a warm welcome to shoppers with disabilities.

Partner with Business

Coworkers will serve as job coach,

County pays for the job coach, rather than the employer

Thank you for your consideration
Michael Hineberg



Independence First

The Resource For People With Disabilities

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Michael Hineberg
ILS Coordinator
Independent Living Services Program



WI Board for People with
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Michael Hineberg
Board Member

Partners with Business:

Solutions for Creating a Welcoming and Diverse Workplace

People with disabilities represent an untapped talent pool. They are ready, willing, and able to work! The **Partners with Business** model can help you attain greater flexibility to meet your business needs, improve your bottom line, and achieve your workplace diversity goals.

- Research has demonstrated that the turnover rate for employees with disabilities is **8% compared to 45%** for other workers – so hiring people with disabilities can help **reduce employee turnover**.
- Research shows that employees with disabilities have **nearly identical job performance ratings** as employees without disabilities.
- The amount of supervision required is **similar for employees with and without** identified disabilities.
- Polls show that the public likes to patronize businesses that hire people with disabilities. In fact, **87%** of customers say they prefer purchasing from companies that hire people with disabilities.
- More than half of job accommodations cost employers **no money at all**.
- Studies have determined a return on investment of **\$28.69 average return for every \$1.00** invested on accommodations.

Partners with Business is a way to support workers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to be successful on the job. The **Partners with Business** model starts with a job developer who works with your business to analyze your workplace needs. The job developer matches your needs to a job candidate(s) with the right skills and strengths. **Partners with Business** capitalizes on the natural supports (coworkers and supervisors) in the workplace and compliments this natural support with more formal supports when necessary for job success. These more formal supports can include assistive technology, co-workers, or job coaches from a vocational support agency.

The **Partners with Business** model has two primary paths for workplace support:

1. The **“Natural Supports”** path - The employer provides support to the worker naturally, through co-workers and supervisors, while accessing a **Partners with Business** vocational support agency for back-up support as needed.
2. The **“Natural Supports Plus”** path – Co-workers and supervisors provide natural supports to the worker but the employer also receives funds to provide extra needed assistance to the employee to be successful on the job. A vocational support agency continues to provide regular check-ins and back-up assistance as needed. In a traditional supported employment model these extra supports would be provided by a job coach from a vocational support agency but in the **Partners with Business** model, the employer is reimbursed for providing this extra support.

Who makes the decision of which path?

After initial job training, the path will be carefully determined by the employer, the job developer, and the worker. The path will depend on the level of support the worker needs to perform job tasks to the employer's standard and the type of team, co-worker, or supervisor support that naturally occurs in the workplace.

If the Natural Supports Plus path is chosen, how is the rate of reimbursement for the employer determined?

Reimbursement is determined based on individual needs of the worker with input from the employer and job developer. The employer and job developer will perform an assessment of the job duties and the level of independence and job supports needed to successfully complete work responsibilities. Once the extra time spent by co-workers and supervisors to assist the worker is determined, a formula is used based on the employer's costs to provide the support. For example, if a worker needs a total of one hour of intermittent support from a co-worker throughout a 6-hour work shift, the hour of co-worker time spent each day providing the extra support to the worker would be reimbursed to the employer.

What are the advantages of Partners with Business?

- **It is unobtrusive.** There are no outside job coaches to "stick out" or get in the way. Allows managers to have direct and immediate supervision of supported employees.
- **No random new people/job coaches show up to your business.** Agency job coaches often change. Partners with Business ensures greater consistency of support by placing the responsibility for support with the employer. This is preferable to both the supported employee and employer.
- **A truly integrated work setting.** The employee is supervised in a manner similar to other coworkers and the opportunity to develop independence and co-worker relationships on the job.
- **A welcoming and accepting workplace.** Employees and supervisors are provided training by the vocational support agency on disability awareness and how to support co-workers with special needs.

Where do the funds to reimburse the employer come from?

Job support funds for people with disabilities come from publically funded sources including state vocational rehabilitation programs under the Department of Workforce Development, Medicaid long-term care services under the Department of Human Services, or school-to-work funds from school districts.

Where is Partners with Business happening?

Partners with Business was piloted in the Madison area and is spreading throughout Wisconsin. Some Partners with Business employers include nursing homes, restaurants, business offices, radio stations, retail settings, country clubs, production facilities, fitness centers, and warehouses. Partners with Business can be successful in any business that is willing to support their employees to be successful!

How can I learn more?

Visit www.wi-bpdd.org/projects/partnerswithbusiness or Contact Shannon Huff at (608)318-0700 or shannon@incontrolwisconsin.org



Testing Partners with Business Statewide: A Successful and Efficient Model for Employing People with Disabilities

Dane County has achieved a much higher community employment rate for people with the most significant disabilities than other Wisconsin counties (over 70% versus less than 10%). This is, in part, due to the relationships that been developed with local employers through the successful implementation of the Partners with Business model of workplace supports. Can the Partners with Business model be expanded to improve employment rates for people with disabilities throughout Wisconsin?

In February 2017, the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities partnered with one high school and three non-profit organizations to establish and “test” the Partners with Business support model with twenty employers in Wisconsin. These collaborators, located in DeForest, Madison, Milwaukee and Hudson, represent a mix of Wisconsin’s urban, rural, and suburban communities. After just a few short months, we are seeing promising results, which could be replicated and expanded upon with further investment and technical assistance. Specifically, the technical assistance structure and time-limited investment included in LRB-1527 could help to scale the Partners with Business model statewide.

Case Examples:

DeForest High School has developed Partners with Business relationships to support 5 students working for 6 employers. The employers include Walmart, All Stop, Rejuvenation Spa, A Growing Place Preschool, Kohls and Yahara Learning Center.

Four of the five students are being supported naturally by co-workers, with no reimbursement to the business from the school, vocational rehabilitation or long-term care program. The school staff check in with the business 1-2 times per month. These “natural” workplace supports from co-workers ***cost nothing*** for the public system (i.e. Schools, Vocational Rehabilitation and Medicaid). They are a result of the coaching and technical assistance the Partners with Business service provider has given the business to prepare the supervisors and co-workers to successfully employ and support a worker with disabilities.



Partners with Business Technical Assistance to Employers results in more natural supports on the job, ***which costs the public system nothing.***

Another student, Sophie, who was hired to work 40 hours per week at the Yahara Learning Center, is supported using another form of Partners with Business supports - called **Partners with Business Plus**. In this situation, the Partners with Business service provider (DeForest High School) worked with the employer to maximize natural supports from the supervisor and coworkers, which costs the state nothing. Because Sophie will need some extra support and coaching on the job – beyond what is typically provided by co-workers – the business is provided a reimbursement for co-workers to step in for short periods of time to provide her with the extra help needed. Regular check-in and back-up services from Partners with Business agency are available to ensure Sophie’s ongoing success. Without using the Partners with Business Plus model, the ongoing job supports for this student would cost the public system more. The chart below demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of the Partners with Business approach.

Traditional Agency or School Supports		Partners with Business Plus	
Number of job coaching hours per week (4x1 hour plus 30 minutes for transportation per visit)	6 hours	Co-worker paid supports needed per week	4 hours
Cost for job coach per hour	\$15 per hour plus benefits	Cost for employer to provide co-worker supports	\$15 per hour
Total weekly costs for job support	\$ 90 per week plus benefits	Total weekly reimbursement to employer for co-worker supports ¹	\$60 per week
Total annual support costs (37 weeks of employment) *	\$3,330 + benefits	Total annual support costs (37 weeks of employment) *	\$2,220

*July 31, 2017 to June 8, 2018

Savings to the Public System with Partners with Business Plus = over \$1100 per year

¹ School funds are used to provide the reimbursement to the employer