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November 19, 2008

Ms. Roberta Gassman, Secretary
Department of Workforce Development
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946

Dear Secretary Gassman:

We are writing in our capacity as chair and vice chair of the Joint Legislative Council's Special Committee on Building Wisconsin's Workforce. The Special Committee recognizes the importance of: (1) credentialing or certification as a means to address workforce needs; and (2) addressing the specific workforce needs in the long-term care industry. This letter sets forth committee recommendations regarding these two issues.

First, credentialing or certification allows workers to gain and demonstrate knowledge and skills and allows employers to attract qualified workers in a more efficient manner. At the Special Committee's July 21, 2008 meeting, you described the Manufacturing Skills Standards Certification (MSSC) program, which provides workers with skills for manufacturing occupations. You noted that the Governor has set a goal of certifying 40% of the manufacturing workforce by 2016 as part of his Grow Wisconsin plan. The Special Committee recommends that the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) use the MSSC program and other credentialing or certification programs as a means to address workforce needs.

Second, the need for workers in the long-term care industry will continue to increase as a result of the aging population in Wisconsin. Workforce shortages in the long-term care industry impact the quality of care that is provided to consumers of long-term care services. The Special Committee has heard testimony regarding the need to retain and recruit long-term care workers, as well as address training standards and inefficiencies. The Special Committee recommends that DWD specifically address workforce needs in the long-term care industry.

The Special Committee hopes that DWD will make credentialing and certification and workforce needs in the long-term care industry top priorities as DWD continues to address workforce needs in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have questions, please contact Jessica Karls or Scott Grosz, Legislative Council Staff Attorneys.

Sincerely,

Representative Pat Strachota
Chair, Special Committee on
Building Wisconsin's Workforce

Senator Robert Wirth
Vice Chair, Special Committee on
Building Wisconsin's Workforce

PS:RW:ksm

cc: Gary Denis, Division of Employment and Training, DWD
Hector Colon, Executive Assistant, DWD

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