

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

April 15, 2022

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing **Assembly Bill 883** in its entirety.

This bill would make several changes to the unemployment insurance program, including: (a) changing the name of the program to "reemployment assistance;" (b) creating additional qualifying requirements to receive benefits, particularly as they relate to work searches for claimants unemployed for over three weeks; (c) requiring the Department of Workforce Development to promulgate rules immediately for drug testing certain unemployment insurance beneficiaries; (d) requiring the department to continue participating in the federal Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program; (e) modifying the weekly wage threshold (at which point unemployment insurance benefits are prorated) from \$30 in any benefit week to \$30 or 40 percent of the claimant's benefit week rate (whichever is greater); (f) requiring the Governor to provide American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding for \$1,000 payments to employers that hire long-term unemployment benefit recipients who lost jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; (g) making technical changes regarding state plans submitted pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, and (h) requiring the department to report, twice each year, to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature, an analysis of unemployment benefit claimants' employment outcomes.

During the coronavirus pandemic, individuals and families across our state relied on unemployment benefits to make ends meet. Now, Wisconsin has returned to work. Our state's unemployment rate is at historic lows, and we have the fewest number of people unemployed ever in our state's history. I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to creating more burdensome requirements for employers while adding more barriers for individuals applying for and receiving economic assistance through programs largely designed to provide support when individuals and families are experiencing economic hardship.

Moreover, the Department of Workforce Development is already performing much of the work this bill purports to newly require or support. The department already helps employers find available workers and provides job services, training, and employment assistance to workers and individuals seeking to join our workforce. For example, "reemployment assistance" is effectively already the

function of the Division of Employment and Training's Bureau of Job Service, which supports the mobile career lab, works in schools and libraries to connect available workers with jobs, supports Department of Corrections' job labs, and various other in-person and online efforts to support workers and connect available workers with employers. They also already administer the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program, which helps approximately 20,000 to 25,000 unemployment insurance claimants a year with conducting work searches, employment counseling and career exploration, and referrals to job training programs. Work registration and reemployment services are already required.

The Legislature might well have been informed about these existing responsibilities, programs, and requirements had this legislation been developed through the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council's agreed-upon bill process or in consultation with the Council and the Department.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor