

# Assembly passes bill on child work permits, broadband legislation

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The state Assembly today passed 64-34 a bill that would eliminate the requirement that minors aged 16 or 17 obtain a child work permit.

Rep. Amy Loudenbeck, R-Clinton, said the bill removes a significant hurdle to homeless students who struggle getting their parents to sign the permit or pay the required fee. The bill, she said, will help ensure those children can work toward “self-sustainability.”

“If parents are unable or unwilling to raise their own kids and provide them with what they need ... they should be able to do that for themselves,” she said.

Dems, whose two amendments on the bill failed, spoke out against the bill, saying it changes child labor laws that have been in place for decades.

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“It’s a step back,” said Rep. Christine Sinicki, D-Milwaukee.

Rep. Cory Mason, D-Racine, raised concerns said the bill ensures it’s “no longer in the hands of parents to decide” whether their kids get a job permit. If the bill sought to address issues homeless teenagers face, he said, it should be narrower.

But Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke, R-Kaukauna, said Dems were making a hypocritical argument because they “support abortion on demand without parental involvement.”

“Talk about serious decisions — life or death decisions,” he said. “You want to take the parents out of that decision, but God forbid someone wants to go out and earn a few bucks for their college.”

The chamber also unanimously passed a broadband expansion bill. AB 123 is similar to one that passed the Senate but without a key amendment. The Senate had added a privacy amendment that would have banned providers from collecting information on their customers' use without their permission.

But Assembly backers wanted to take up the bill without the change. The version without the amendment would need to clear the Senate before going to Gov. Scott Walker's desk.

Rep. Romaine Quinn, R-Rice Lake, said at a news conference ahead of today's session the bill he authored is a "huge boon for many areas across the state" who are lacking adequate internet access.

The chamber also passed:

\*AB 194, which lets large music festivals such as Eaux Claires allow those under 21 years old in legally without their parents. The bill's author, Rep. Rob Summerfield, R-Bloomer, said it would "save music festivals in our area" that have been operating illegally on that front. He noted those festivals spur tourism in the state, saying in his area they have a \$20 million impact.

\*AB 58, which changes the process of monitoring law enforcement dogs that have bitten a person and are already immunized against rabies. The bill removes the requirement that those dogs be examined by a veterinarian, which police departments say is a costly mandate. The bill directs law enforcement agencies to notify the local health department if the dog displays any unusual behavior.

\*AB 115 and AB 116, two bills introduced by the Joint Legislative Council relating to the access of civil legal aid.