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# Gov. Walker: Gov. Walker releases column: “Building America’s future, investing in our nation’s workforce”

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Madison, Wisconsin **–** Governor Scott Walker released the following column today highlighting the importance of workforce development when it comes to ensuring the future success of Wisconsin and America.

**Building America’s Future, Investing in Our Nation’s Workforce**

Workforce is our number one issue here in Wisconsin. That’s what I told President Donald J. Trump during a meeting at the White House with Governors from across the nation.

Specifically, I asked the President to focus on workforce development and highlight the many different careers that require something other than an undergraduate degree. This is not a Republican or Democrat platform – it goes far beyond that. It’s simply common sense that the future success of our nation depends upon our ability to provide the next generation of workers with the practical skills and knowledge they need to thrive in our workforce.

President Trump took this message to heart and visited Wisconsin earlier this week to kick off his “Workforce Week” with a stop at Waukesha County Technical College. We’re thrilled the President chose to kick-off his Workforce Week here in Wisconsin, and believe our state can serve as a national model when it comes to workforce development programs.

You see, workforce development has always been a top priority for me. When I was running for office in 2010, the unemployment rate in Wisconsin peaked at 9.4 percent. Now, at 3.1 percent, the unemployment rate is the lowest it's been since 1999.  Most importantly, more people are employed in our state than ever before.

On top of all of that, Wisconsin now ranks as a Top 10 state for labor participation and for business. We went from the bottom ten in 2010 to a Top 10 state for business in 2017 according to *Chief Executive Magazine*.

Our state is back on track, but there's still a lot of work to be done. Our focus now has shifted from jobs, jobs, jobs, to workforce, workforce, workforce.

Thanks to our common-sense, conservative reforms, our state has had a state budget surplus every year, which we're calling the Reform Dividend. And we're using this Reform Dividend to invest in programs and education that help us produce the highly-skilled, dependable workforce Wisconsin is known for.

Our state budget proposal invests more actual dollars into K-12 education than ever before and includes funding for workforce development programs like career exploration courses, the Early College Credit Program, Youth Apprenticeship programs, Fabrication Laboratories, or Fab Labs, and Project SEARCH. These programs are crucial tools that provide our students with the education they need as they prepare for higher education, career, and life.

Once our students complete high school, we make it even easier and more affordable to pursue a degree at a technical college, trade school, or university as well. We froze tuition at all University of Wisconsin campuses for four years and will do so again for the next two years in our budget. We are also fighting to freeze technical college tuition and increase financial support for students so we can develop the workforce Wisconsin needs for high-demand industries like manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, and information technology.

Our Wisconsin Works for Everyone welfare reform package offers hands-on skills and job training as well as education courses to adults dependent on public assistance. This connects them to jobs and family-supporting careers, thus moving them from government dependence to true independence and renewing the dignity that comes from work.

The bottom line is this: we want to help Wisconsin, and its workers, become some of

the most cutting-edge and prosperous in the nation. We're working and winning for Wisconsin, bridging the skills gap, and empowering our students and workers.

We're confident our workforce development programs are working to build a strong future for Wisconsin. President Trump is working to develop similar programs that invest in the nation's workforce. We're proud he chose Wisconsin as an example of a strong workforce to highlight the importance of workforce development, and we look forward to working with him on this issue in the future.

We will continue to work together to build America's future by investing in innovative and forward-thinking workforce development programs that prepare our workers for 21st-century jobs and a family-supporting career.