

Rep. Loudenbeck: Public hearing held for teen employment act

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Madison – Rep. Amy Loudenbeck (R-Clinton) testified today in support of a bill she authored, Assembly Bill 25 (AB 25), which would lower the age requirement for a work permit to under 16 years of age. AB 25 is the first of a series of initiatives Rep. Loudenbeck plans to work on this session to improve access to employment and other daily living supports for unaccompanied and homeless youth.

“Unaccompanied and homeless youth are vulnerable to human trafficking, exploitation, and abuse,” said Rep. Loudenbeck. “Providing these young people with an opportunity for legal, gainful employment so they can complete their education and become self-supporting adults will reduce their risk for negative outcomes.”

Under current law, a minor must obtain a work permit prior to employment. The process of obtaining a work permit includes providing a signed letter or letters from the employer and the parent or guardian and the payment of a \$10 fee. The permit is employer specific, so a teen may be required to obtain multiple permits prior to reaching the age of 18.

“The current process poses significant challenges for unaccompanied and homeless teens seeking a way to legally earn money to pay for personal and living expenses. Furthermore, I would argue that the process is tedious, and in the cases of older teens, unnecessary. AB 25 would eliminate a layer of government bureaucracy and streamline the employment process for Wisconsin teens,” said Rep. Loudenbeck.

Wisconsin is currently one of just 15 states that require a work permit for residents

under the age of 18. There are currently 18 states that have similar age requirements including Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois.

The bill does not modify current state and federal laws related to hours and times of day a minor may work, and restricted or prohibited employment for minors are not being changed.

For more information on the bill, or to track it's progress, click here: <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2017/proposals/reg/asm/bill/ab25>