

Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty: WILL fellow testifies on apprenticeship legislation

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October 4, 2017 - Milwaukee, WI - Today, WILL Research Fellow Natalie Goodnow testified for informational purposes to the State Senate Committee on Labor and Regulatory Reform on [SB 411, a bill to reform apprentice-to-journeyworker ratios in the state of Wisconsin.](#)

The apprentice-to-journeyworker ratios in Wisconsin, administered and enforced by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), determine exactly how many apprentices may be on a job site in relation to the number of journeyworkers, or more experienced workers. This system is often arbitrary and varies from profession to profession. For example, in carpentry, the Wisconsin ratio starts at one apprentice per one journeyworker. Yet, if a company wishes to hire an additional apprentice, they must employ three journeyworkers per apprentice. SB 411 specifically prohibits the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development from proscribing apprentice-to-journeyworker ratios of more than 1:1. A study from the C.D. Howe Institute found that, "journeyperson-apprentice ratios above one [to one] result in 38 percent fewer young workers - those between the ages of 25 and 34 - in a trade." Reforming these complex ratios will serve to expand opportunities for aspiring workers in Wisconsin, lower costs for consumers and employers, and serve to align Wisconsin with national apprenticeship trends.

"Wisconsin's complex and often arbitrary apprenticeship ratios create an unnecessary bottleneck for aspiring workers at a time when our workforce needs are too often going unmet," said Natalie Goodnow, Research Fellow at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty. "By reforming these ratios, Wisconsin can expand opportunity and lower costs without sacrificing safety on the job site." The testimony submitted to the Committees can be found [here](#).