

Gov. Walker: Signs Wisconsin Works for Everyone welfare reform plan

Posted on Wednesday, Apr 11, 2018

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MADISON – Governor Scott Walker is signing nine welfare reform bills into law today as part of his Wisconsin Works for Everyone welfare reform plan at the Marathon County Job Center in Wausau, Dick’s Fresh Market in River Falls, and the Milwaukee Rescue Mission. These bills are another key item of Governor Walker’s Ambitious Agenda for 2018.

“Wisconsin is leading the nation on welfare reform,” said Governor Walker. “We want to help those in need move from government dependence to true independence through the dignity of work. We believe welfare should be more like a trampoline and less like a hammock. Our Wisconsin Works for Everyone welfare reform bills ensure help to those who truly need it, while providing the training and assistance they need to re-enter the workforce and regain independence. We do all of this while also protecting our taxpayers through asset limits on public assistance. Thanks to Speaker Robin Vos and Senator Chris Kapenga for their work on these bills.”

Governor Walker’s Wisconsin Works for Everyone Welfare Reform comprehensively addresses welfare reform through nine key initiatives. Special Session Assembly Bills 1, 2, and 4 were signed in Wausau; Special Session Assembly Bills 6, 7, and 8 will be signed in River Falls; and Special Session Assembly Bills 3, 5, and 9 will be signed in Milwaukee.

Special Session Assembly Bill 1: This legislation requires the Department of Health Services (DHS) to set required hours of participation in the FoodShare employment and training program (FSET) to coincide with the maximum allowed by the federal

government, if those hours are increased from the current allowable amount of 80 hours per month for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD). Additionally, if DHS sets the hours at the maximum allowed under federal law, it must also set required hours for able-bodied adults with school-aged dependents. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Assembly 62-35, then was concurred in the Senate 18-14. It is Act 263.

Special Session Assembly Bill 2: This legislation would require able-bodied adults to complete a work requirement or participate in a workforce development course in order to maintain eligibility for the FoodShare program, unless the person is a caretaker of a child under six or enrolled in school half-time or more. Since ABAWD are already subject to the work requirement, the bill would extend the work requirement to households with school aged children. The bill as amended prohibits the DHS from requiring an individual who is a caretaker of a disabled dependent to participate in FSET. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Assembly 62-35, then was concurred in the Senate 16-13. It is Act 264.

Special Session Assembly Bill 3: This legislation creates asset restriction for W-2, WI Shares, and FoodShare programs. Participants cannot have a home value more than 200% of the median statewide home value excluding the value of agricultural land, and combined equity of vehicles cannot exceed \$20,000. For W-2, the asset limit for combined vehicle value remains at the current level of \$10,000. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Senate 18-14 and was concurred in the Assembly 62-35. It is Act 269.

Special Session Assembly Bill 4: This legislation allows public housing authorities to assist in developing employment plans for individuals in public housing. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Senate 18-14 and was concurred in the Assembly 62-35. It is Act 265.

Special Session Assembly Bill 5: This legislation would create a pilot program for periodic payments of the earned income tax credit. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Senate 18-14, and was concurred in the Assembly 62-35. It is Act 270.

Special Session Assembly Bill 6: This legislation requires the Department of Health

Services and Department of Children and Families to implement performance-based payment systems for Wisconsin Works and FSET contracts. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Senate 17-14, and was concurred in the Assembly 62-35. It is Act 266.

Special Session Assembly Bill 7: This legislation creates a Pay for Success contracting program for public benefit programs. The Department of Administration (DOA) is authorized to contract with a private service provider for payments to provide social, employment, or correctional services to individuals only if DOA expects that the contract will result in significant performance improvements. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Senate 18-14 and was concurred in the Assembly 62-35. It is Act 267.

Special Session Assembly Bill 8: This legislation requires child support compliance for those receiving Medicaid. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Senate 18-14 and was concurred in the Assembly 62-35. It is Act 268.

Special Session Assembly Bill 9: This legislation requires DHS to request a waiver for the federal government to create a savings program, similar to a health savings account, in the Medicaid program. This bill, authored by Speaker Robin Vos (R—Rochester) and Senator Chris Kapenga (R—Delafield), passed the Senate 18-14, and was concurred in the Assembly 61-36. It is Act 271.