

Gov. Walker: Weekly radio address: Wisconsin is working!

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MADISON – Governor Scott Walker released his Weekly Radio Address today titled “Wisconsin is Working!”

Hi, Scott Walker here.

Wisconsin is working! Literally.

Workforce levels are at historic highs. The percentage of people working is one of the best in the nation. And the unemployment rate is now down to 2.9% – the lowest in the history of the state.

Let me repeat that: the unemployment rate is the lowest level it has ever been in Wisconsin at 2.9%. The previous low was 3.0% in May, June and July of 1999. That was back when Tommy Thompson was our Governor. Things were pretty good back then. They’re great now. And they are going to be even better in the years to come as we keep moving Wisconsin forward.

All of this is a stark contrast to eight years ago when the unemployment rate hit 9.2% at the start of 2010. Wisconsin had lost more than 130,000 jobs in the four years before we took office. Our focus back then was on JOBS, JOBS, JOBS. Now, it’s on WORKFORCE, WORKFORCE, WORKFORCE.

This is a major reason why we were able to invest more actual dollars into our schools than ever before in our history. That translates into an extra \$200 for every student in every school across the state this year and – on top of that – an extra \$204 per student next year. We doubled the number of youth apprenticeships,

doubled the support for Fab Labs - otherwise called fabrication laboratories - and increased early college credit for two and four-year colleges and universities.

With record low unemployment, education and training are increasingly important. I just signed a new law to help rural schools to provide more opportunities for students and changes so that every school district is able to invest an adequate amount for each student. And because of our past reforms, schools can staff based on merit and pay based on performance. That means that schools can put the best and the brightest in the classroom.

We also made major investments in our technical college system. Plus, we froze tuition for six years in a row at all University of Wisconsin (UW) campuses to make college more affordable for students and working families. And we increased funding in this budget to the UW System but tied it to increasing the number of graduates in high demand areas that can be hired right here in Wisconsin.

When unemployment is at an all-time low, we need to also break down more barriers to employment. I am proud to report that our efforts to hire more people with disabilities continue to grow as we are now a top ten state in that area. We dramatically increased vocational training in our correctional system. And, just as Tommy Thompson did years ago, we are leading the nation in welfare reform. You see, we cannot afford to have anyone sitting on the sidelines.

On top of our education and training efforts and breaking down barriers to work, we are now recruiting more talent to the state. Veterans and their families, graduates of Wisconsin colleges and universities and Midwest millennials are the three target audiences for new employees in our state.

Historic levels of employment and a historically low unemployment rate at 2.9% means more of our graduates can stay in our state to pursue careers.

Wisconsin is Working! We don't want to turn back. Let's keep moving Wisconsin forward.