

McCabe campaign: Proposes test run for Basic Income program

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FEBRUARY 20, 2018 – Wisconsin governor candidate Mike McCabe said today once elected he would move to start a small-scale pilot program to test whether establishing a Basic Income for vulnerable workers could help ensure that everyone shares in Wisconsin's future economic growth, making Wisconsin a state-level testing ground for moving nationally toward expansion of Social Security eligibility to all age groups.

The experiment is needed to prepare for the future as the global economy rapidly transitions to industry providing less human employment, with automated factories and robotized production and driverless vehicles and artificial intelligence making many jobs of the past disappear. Wisconsin is especially vulnerable as the state's economy relied more on heavy manufacturing than most states, and manufacturing employment here has been on the decline.

Tech titans Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Richard Branson and others have called for creating a Universal Basic Income (UBI) because of the severe job losses that will inevitably accompany the application of new technologies in manufacturing and other industries. A few nations and communities in the U.S. are experimenting with the concept, but McCabe's proposal would make Wisconsin the first state in this country to test it.

"We can't afford to stick our heads in the sand about how the economy is changing.

Robots are here. Driverless vehicles are coming. Many of yesterday's jobs are in jeopardy today and are going to be gone tomorrow," McCabe said. "Working people aren't blind, they can see what's coming. It's why most Americans believe our kids will be worse off than their parents. That bleak future can be avoided if we renegotiate the social contract. Totally new approaches to maintaining financial stability and social cohesion in an increasingly jobless economy are going to have to be considered. The sooner we figure out which approaches work best, the better. We're all in this together."

McCabe's proposal calls for a \$9-million-a-year program for 1,000 participants, with 500 people receiving a Basic Income of \$1,000 a month and another 500 individuals receiving \$500 per month for comparison purposes. The experiment will evaluate how participants fare economically compared to the rest of the state's population.

"If it has a positive impact, great. This could pave the way to Social Security for All nationally. If it doesn't work or it has too many negative side effects, then we take what we learn and develop better ways to create economic and social stability so no one is left behind," McCabe said.