

# Rep. Edming: Bi-partisan Employment First Bill approved by the State Senate, heads to the Governor

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MADISON, Wis. – Yesterday, Assembly Bill (AB) 625 also known as the Employment First Bill, was unanimously approved by the State Senate. This bi-partisan legislation is authored by Representatives James Edming (R-Glen Flora) and Jimmy Anderson (D-Fitchburg) and Senator Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst). The Employment First movement is the promotion of policies that encourage competitive integrated employment (CIE). CIE is the employment of individuals with disabilities in a workplace in the community working alongside people without a disability.

“Working at a job in the community is a goal for many people with disabilities,” said Rep. Edming. “Under this legislation, Wisconsin will lead the nation in promoting Employment First policies which will help these people meet that goal. I am thrilled that this important legislation is on the way to Governor Walker’s desk.”

Several state agencies have responsibilities to fund services to help youth and adults with disabilities find employment. However, at times these services are duplicated or fragmented. Under AB 625 the agencies with responsibilities in this area are required to collaborate and develop a joint plan to assist people with disabilities in finding employment in the community.

“With passage of AB 625, Wisconsin will now be a national leader in promoting policies that assist people with disabilities in finding employment,” said Sen. Tiffany. “Anyone who is willing and able to work in Wisconsin should be able to find a job.”

Wisconsin has outpaced the nation annually in its efforts to integrate individuals with disabilities into our workforce. Despite our best efforts, only 41% of all working-age Wisconsinites with disabilities are employed. AB 625 seeks to improve that number.

“By leveraging the data and power of our state agencies, we can foster more inclusive workplaces,” said Rep. Anderson. “Supporting community integrated employment and workplace choice is vital for our

workforce and will lead to a more productive and inclusive business environment. AB 625 will do just that.”

The authors wish to thank the many disability advocacy organizations that contributed to the success of this legislation including, The Arc Wisconsin, Disability Service Provider Network, The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities, and Disability Rights Wisconsin.

AB 625 now heads to Governor Walker’s desk for his consideration.