

Rep. Rohrkaste: Assembly and Senate approve multiple Rohrkaste bills

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Madison, WI – Yesterday, multiple pieces of legislation authored by Representative Mike Rohrkaste (R-Neenah) passed in the Assembly and/or the Senate. These bills focused on healthcare and economic development, and most passed with bipartisan support.

“Many thanks to colleagues on both sides of the aisle for working with me to pass each of these bills that will improve healthcare outcomes at lower costs, and aid local economic development,” said Rep. Rohrkaste. “These bills will have a direct and positive impact on the residents of the Fox Cities and Wisconsin.” The health care related bills are:

Assembly Bill 653/Senate Bill 543: Requires facilities that perform mammograms to notify women if they have heterogeneously or extremely dense breast tissue, which can mask the detection of tumors in normal mammography. By providing this information to women, they can discuss other diagnostic tools with their health care provider to ensure any instance of breast cancer is diagnosed as soon as possible, thus improving outcomes and lowering costs.

Assembly Bill 632/Senate Bill 527: Establishes \$500,000 in grants to expand awareness for public/private Alzheimer’s and dementia resources. Raising the awareness of existing programs can lead to earlier diagnosis, better care and the necessary support for family caregivers.

Assembly Bill 679/Senate Bill 575: Allows pharmacists to dispense biosimilar (commonly called generic) versions of biologic drugs which are growing in number. These drugs have been determined by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to be equivalent to their brand name counterpart, most often at lesser expense, thus saving money for consumers.

Assembly Bill 608/Senate Bill 533: Allows pharmacy technicians to provide services that fall within the practice of pharmacy under the direction, supervision, and inspection of licensed pharmacists. The bill legally recognizes common practices and improves services to nursing home, assisted living complexes, and correctional institutions. It also provides needed training opportunities for pharmacy students.

Assembly Bill 501/Senate Bill 416: (passed as an amendment to Special Session Assembly Bill 6). Creates a pilot program to incentivize 2000 FoodShare eligible households in rural and urban Wisconsin to purchase fresh produce and other healthy food options, which they normally would not buy. Using a “carrot” approach, the bill’s goal is to enable people on Foodshare to make better food choices that can lead to overall better health.

The economic development bills are:

Assembly Bill 793/Senate Bill 668: Establishes a per project cap for the Wisconsin Historic Tax Credit (HTC) of \$3.5 million (currently \$500,000). The HTC has an eight to one investment rate of return to the state and has spurred economic development by re-developing historic buildings into income producing properties in every corner of Wisconsin, including the Fox Cities.

Assembly Bill 824/Senate Bill 695: Allows trucks equipped with certain radar and communications technology to safely follow each other more closely. This technology known as “platooning” links two trucks to each other to simultaneously accelerate, decelerate, or brake, thus maintaining the proper distance for “drafting” that results in significant fuel savings. Both trucks still have individual drivers so this is not autonomous driving, rather it supplements safe driving with technology.

Assembly Bill 811/Senate Bill 679: Allocates \$6.8 million to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to work in conjunction with the Departments of Tourism, Workforce Development, and Veterans Affairs to attract and retain a talented workforce for the thousands of open career positions that exist throughout our state. These efforts will include advertising in surrounding states for people to move

to Wisconsin, targeted efforts to keep college graduates here, and programs to employ military personnel whose service has ended.