

Rep. Loudenbeck: Five bills clear State Assembly

Posted on Friday, Feb 21, 2020

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Madison– Today, five bills authored by State Representative Amy Loudenbeck (R-Clinton), passed the State Assembly with broad bipartisan support.

Criminal Justice

Senate Bill 468 (Assembly Bill 501): funds pay progression for state public defenders (SPD). Significant progress has been made this legislative session to ensure Wisconsin's criminal justice system functions efficiently and effectively and that each of the three legs of the criminal justice stool (Courts, Prosecutors, and Public Defenders) are adequately resourced and balanced.

Unfortunately, the long-standing practice of linking pay progression funding for Assistant District Attorneys to the level of pay progression funding for SPDs did not continue in the 2019-2021 budget process and SB 468 corrects that.

“One key to fulfilling the constitutional right to the effective assistance of counsel for indigent individuals is ensuring the availability of Public Defender attorneys. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Representative Loudenbeck, the Legislature has given us the tool to retain and recruit attorneys to fill this vital role,” said State Public Defender Kelli Thompson.

Agriculture

Wisconsin's agriculture industry contributes \$104 billion to the state economy annually and Wisconsin has a rich and proud farming heritage, particularly in the 31st Assembly District. The last several years have been difficult for Wisconsin farmers across the board. Assembly Republicans put forward a big and bold plan to

provide Wisconsin farmers short-term and long-term relief. The four bills listed below are part of the long-term plan to continue to support farmers and make sure Wisconsin continues to be a leader in agriculture industries across the nation.

Assembly Bill 556: requires the University of Wisconsin to recognize and reward time spent by state integrated specialists teaching Wisconsin farmers in the same way other faculty are evaluated for teaching in a classroom. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

Assembly Bills 874 and 876: seek to fully leverage the assets of the UW-System (AB 874) and UW-Madison (AB 876) by directing these institutions to inventory, evaluate, and provide recommendations on how to enhance their agriculture-related course offerings. This information will help us determine the best way forward in these difficult times so Wisconsin can lead the way in 21st century agriculture. The bills are awaiting Senate action.

Assembly Bill 875: authored with Rep. Treig Pronschinske (R-Mondovi) gives farmers and those who are self-employed the ability to fully deduct their health insurance expenses on their income taxes, just like every other type of business arrangement already can under current law, providing tax relief for small businesses and farmers in Wisconsin. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

“As an organization who represents farmers of all sizes and commodities, we see a lot of potential in these bills,” said Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Joe Bragger. “Our rural communities deserve attention and we appreciate the leadership shown by Representative Loudenberg to focus on issues that are important to Wisconsin farmers.”