

Reps. Petryk, Pentermann and Sen. Roth: Bill to reform UI program

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Madison...Today Representative Petryk, Penterman, and Senator Roth introduced legislation to fundamentally reform the unemployment insurance (UI) program in Wisconsin. The new Reemployment Assistance Act would refocus UI to help people find employment while they continue to receive financial job loss assistance. A video release on the bill can also be viewed at <https://youtu.be/FzPVYxTrh5g>

“Wisconsin has a workforce crisis right now and we need to make sure that we do everything we can go get people off of the labor market sidelines and into employment as quickly as possible,” said Representative Petryk. “There are more jobs right now in Wisconsin than before the pandemic started. We need to take this opportunity now to reform the existing unemployment insurance program in our state, which has failed under the leadership of the current governor, and help those folks get the workforce supports they need to land their next career as quickly as possible.”

One of the key provisions of the bill is the expansion of reemployment services for those who are receiving UI. This bill will require universal workforce assessments of an individual’s skills sets. This data can be used to send people customized employment offers. In addition, the data will be used to provide people customized employment plans which will allow them to access services like resume writing workshops, soft-skills training, and employment workshops.

“Businesses in every city, town and village in Wisconsin are looking for workers right now, and this legislation is the missing link in the reemployment journey for Wisconsinites who are currently out of the workforce,” said Senator Roth. “We will

repurpose the UI system, utilizing the tools and resources of the state, to give people the job-specific training and skills needed to get them back on their feet. It's past time for the state to facilitate connecting workers to employers to get businesses back open and back in the black."

This legislation also aims to help those who are about to end their UI and for those who recently lost their UI. The bill requires the Department Workforce Development to provide a one-on-one employment counseling sessions before someone reaches the end of their claim. It also provides a one-time tax credit to businesses who hire the nearly 43,000 people whose unemployment claim recently ended. These credits could be used to help remove the barrier keeping these people on the workforce sidelines.

"Wisconsinites on unemployment insurance need a hand up to get them to their next job opportunity," said Representative Penterman. "This bill transforms Wisconsin's outdated unemployment program into an innovative system to connect Wisconsinites to good-paying jobs so they can re-enter the workforce as soon as possible."