

Sen. Jacque: Bill promoting in-demand trade jobs may soon be on Governor's desk

Posted on Monday, Oct 25, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON... To help train skilled workers desperately needed by Wisconsin employers, the State Senate today cleared a measure extending the deductibility of postsecondary tuition to apprenticeship instruction. The bill is also expected to pass the Assembly tomorrow and may soon be on Gov. Evers' desk.

State Sen. André Jacque (R- De Pere), co-author of the Workforce and Education Fairness Act with State Rep. Shannon Zimmerman (R-River Falls), said the legislation levels the education playing field by addressing a significant financial barrier to these skilled trade careers.

"In 2019, manufacturing workers averaged \$74,252 in compensation, according to the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)," Sen. Jacque said. "Apprenticeships have been successful in helping meet the growing demand for these family-supporting jobs, but the financial challenges can be daunting."

Currently, all tuition for schooling programs that are approved by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) qualifies as tax deductible, but apprenticeship programs are not included. The Workforce and Education Fairness Act ([Senate Bill 125](#)/Assembly Bill 115) levels the playing field by creating an individual income tax deduction for tuition expenses paid by an individual participating in an apprenticeship program approved by DWD.

“This legislation constructs an additional educational pipeline into well-paying, skilled trade careers,” Sen. Jacque said. “Continued growth of manufacturing, which accounts for about \$65 billion – nearly 19 percent – of Wisconsin’s GDP, counts on workers being able to learn the skills these employers need.”

Sen. Jacque said a broad coalition supporting the Workforce and Education Fairness Act includes the Wisconsin Economic Development Association, Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association, Associated Builders and Contractors, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, Waukesha County Business Alliance, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, Wisconsin Builders Association, and the Wisconsin Grocers Association.

In addition, Sen. Jacque has re-introduced legislation providing an additional \$100,000 per academic year to assist technical college students in the Tools of the Trade apprenticeship grant program.

“These initiatives together provide opportunities for this generation to build better lives for themselves and their families,” Sen. Jacque said. “At the same time, our Wisconsin economy will benefit from a growing, highly-skilled workforce.”

The Workforce and Education Fairness Act will likely pass the State Assembly tomorrow. It must then be signed by the Governor to become law.

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.