

Dept. of Workforce Development, WHEDA: Host Pride Month panel featuring David Clarenbach

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MADISON – Wisconsin’s leadership as the first state to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and housing marks its 40th anniversary this year.

To honor the occasion and celebrate Pride Month, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority are co-hosting a panel featuring former Assembly Speaker Pro Tempore David Clarenbach, who authored the groundbreaking, bipartisan legislation. The hybrid event will be held Monday, June 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at WHEDA’s training center, 908 E. Main Street, 53703. Register for the free, public event in person or [online](#).

“I knew I was gay from my high school days and also knew that I wanted to be involved in public service,” said Clarenbach, who served in the Wisconsin Assembly from 1974 to 1993. “Although my legislative colleagues on both sides of the aisle made no issue of my orientation, it was clear that other LGBTQ community members faced significant barriers and lacked legal protections. With bipartisan support, Gov. Lee Dreyfus signed AB-70 on Feb. 25, 1982. The measure amended Wisconsin’s Fair Employment Law and we became the first state to protect people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public accommodations.”

Other presenters and panelists for the **Wisconsin Pride and Equal Rights Panel** include DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek, WHEDA CEO and Executive Director Elmer Moore Jr., DWD Equal Rights Division Administrator Jesús Villa,

Unemployment Insurance Division Administrator Jim Chiolino, and former Equal Rights Division Administrator LeAnna Ware.

DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek said the agency continues efforts to make Wisconsin a fair and just place for all people to live and work by enforcing Wisconsin's Fair Employment Law through its Equal Rights Division.

"In Wisconsin, diversity is part of our economic strength," Pechacek said. "During this Pride Month, we want to express our gratitude to David and honor all those who have made Wisconsin a leader in fair employment and housing. When our workforce reflects our communities, Wisconsin thrives."

WHEDA CEO Elmer Moore, Jr. said that affordable housing is critical for everyone's well-being and that WHEDA recognizes that LGBTQ+ community members may face unique challenges in accessing quality, affordable housing.

"At WHEDA, we know that stable housing is fundamental to workforce readiness and to building stronger communities," Moore said. "We provide resources and tools to help create more inclusive housing opportunities because a safe, affordable place to live is the foundation for everyone to achieve their true potential."

Learn more about DWD's support for employers, employees and job seekers through protections afforded in [Wisconsin's Fair Employment Law](#).