

Rep. Born: Advocates for workforce solutions

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Madison, WI - State Representative Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam) voted for a package of legislation today aimed at strengthening the workforce in Wisconsin.

“Workforce is one of the top issues that I hear from my constituents. They’re concerned about the impact that the shortage of workers is having on the price and availability of goods and services,” Rep. Born said. “These bills take us in the direction of getting more people off the sidelines and back into the workforce, while attracting new talent to our state.”

The Assembly met to take up several bills that reform Wisconsin’s welfare programs; re-enforce existing requirements in public assistance programs; and attract new workers to the state. Among the initiatives, Assembly Bill 935, authored by Rep. Born, would require the Governor to implement existing work and drug-testing requirements that Governor Evers is currently waiving. Also, Assembly Bill 940 would require Evers’ administration to implement the talent attraction initiative that was required in the budget within 30 days. He has not launched the program in the eight months since the budget passed.

“When people hear that our unemployment rate is below 3%, they think that means we’re at full employment. What many don’t realize is that we still have nearly 100,000 fewer people out of the workforce compared to pre-pandemic. Those individuals don’t show up in the unemployment rate if they’re not looking for work,” Rep. Born added. “We need all of those people back in the workforce, and more people brought into our state, because there are over 200,000 jobs open.”

While workforce participation is down, enrollment in welfare programs remains elevated. The number of individuals who remain on government assistance, despite

their income exceeding eligibility thresholds, has more than doubled.

Wisconsin Republicans have called on Governor Evers to implement the work requirements and drug-testing requirements for able-bodied adults on welfare programs. They have also asked him to spend some of the billions of dollars in federal pandemic aid at his discretion on workforce initiatives. According to Governor Evers' most recent release, just over 1% of the total amount of federal aid spent has been on Workforce and Employment initiatives. He has not implemented statutory requirements of the state's welfare programs.

These initiatives come after the Legislature invested millions in child care, education and training programs to make work more accessible.