

Rep. Steffen, Sen. Hutton: Legislators introduce bill to help legally blind get to and from work

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Madison, WI - State Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) and State Senator Rob Hutton (R-Brookfield) introduced legislation that would create a tax credit for people who are legally blind (as defined and qualified by the IRS) to help cover a portion of the costs associated with

getting to and from work. According to the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, 70% of people with visual impairments are unemployed and another 22% are underemployed.

“Transportation is often the greatest barrier to employment for this community—which helps explain their staggering unemployment numbers. While folks who are legally blind possess the motivation, education and talents to professionally contribute to the workforce, they remain almost entirely untapped due to transportation barriers. This bill works to remove this obstacle to employment for people who are legally blind,” said Rep. Steffen.

The tax credit will cover up to 50% of transportation costs and is capped at \$1500 per tax year. As this credit is non-refundable, the credit is essentially self-funded via tax revenue generated by the claimant. This proposal is supported by Beyond Vision.

“There are many people who can work and want to work, but getting to work is prohibitive simply because their vision is impaired. This legislation helps them afford safe and reliable transportation.

“With our current workforce challenges, lowering these barriers for skilled, dedicated, legally blind employees is both the right thing to do and another way for the private sector to meet its workforce needs,” said Sen. Hutton.

The bill is currently being circulated for co-sponsorship support before it will be available for a public hearing later this legislative session. For more information please contact the office of Representative Steffen at (608)237-9104 or by email at Rep.Steffen@legis.wisconsin.gov or Senator Hutton at (608)266-2512 or Sen.Hutton@legis.wisconsin.gov.