



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

April 30, 2026

Amy Pechacek, Secretary  
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
201 E. Washington Avenue  
Madison, WI 523707

Dear Secretary Pechacek:

In recognition of National Apprenticeship Week (April 26 – May 2) we are writing for guidance on how to reform Wisconsin's antiquated apprenticeship ratios that are allowing our neighboring states of Iowa and Michigan to pass us in bridging their construction skills gap.

In Governor Evers' veto message, he wrote that Assembly Bill 241 (AB 241) was not developed through close collaboration with industry partners, labor organizations, or training providers. During the eleven months from when AB 241 was introduced to being vetoed by Governor Evers, legislative offices heard from many constituents and external stakeholders about the proposal. The feedback was overwhelmingly supportive, but we took all comments into consideration and actually amended the bill to reflect some concerns. The only communication we received about the administration's position was your written testimony submitted to the respective legislative public hearings, and the Governor's veto message which essentially mirrored your testimony. Both you and Governor Evers' concerns about loosening the apprentice to journey worker ratio for construction industry-wide fell into two categories:

- 1) Doing so may negatively influence safety and quality instruction.
- 2) Doing so may negatively affect compliance with current U.S. Department of Labor guidance.

While it would have been nice to be informed by the Evers' administration about ways to amend AB 241 to address your concerns, we are requesting your guidance and advice to prevent another veto of legislation like AB 241 that would allow one skilled worker to supervise more than one apprentice when it is introduced next legislative session. Since there will be a new gubernatorial administration next legislative session, we hope you are able to consult with longtime DWD Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS) employees that develop, administer, and regulate the Registered Apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, and Certified Pre-Apprenticeship programs.

Anecdotally in committee testimony, legislators learned about apprenticeship programs operating in Wisconsin right now that allow one journey worker to oversee more than one apprentice, including construction apprenticeship programs. Specifically submitted in committee testimony was IBEW 890 Janesville Collective Bargaining Agreement that allows one journey worker to supervise three apprentices, which is 50% more lenient than the ratio vetoed in AB 241 (please see attached).

Please provide answers to the following questions:

- 1) Of the state of Wisconsin registered apprenticeship programs, how many allow a ratio of greater than one journey worker to one apprentice?
- 2) Of those, how many are construction apprenticeship programs?



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- 3) One of the concerns about AB 241 was that Wisconsin must maintain a state apprenticeship program that conforms with 29 CFR Sub A, Parts 29 and 30. How did those programs with more lenient apprenticeship ratios alleviate any risk to federal accreditation?
- 4) You wrote in your testimony that BAS should make apprentice ratio decisions on a case-by-case basis, depending on particular safety concerns. What was the process for BAS to allow more lenient than one-to-one, and how did the programs address your concerns about safety and quality?
- 5) Is there a different ratio approval standard for union vs open shop apprenticeship programs?

Wisconsin has always been a national leader in apprenticeship, launching the nation’s first registered apprenticeship. Wisconsin set another record for apprenticeship in 2025, beating the previous state’s records in 2024 and 2023. For over a century, we have led the nation in addressing the skilled workers shortage across dozens of lifelong, family-sustaining careers. Let’s work together to stay in the lead and determine how to get more skilled construction workers trained in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Representative Dave Maxey  
83<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District

Senator Chris Kapenga  
33<sup>rd</sup> Senate District

Representative Adam Neylon  
15<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Representative Paul Melotik  
22<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District

Senator Julian Bradley  
28<sup>th</sup> Senate District

Senator Rob Hutton  
5<sup>th</sup> Senate District

Senator André Jacque  
1<sup>st</sup> Senate District

Representative Lindee Brill  
27<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Representative Dan Knodl  
24<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Representative Brent Jacobson  
87<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Representative Jerry O'Connor  
60<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Representative Chanz Green  
74<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Representative Chuck Wichgers  
84<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Representative Joy Goeben  
5<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Representative Rick Gundrum  
58<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Armstrong".

Representative Dave Armstrong  
67<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Murphy".

Representative David Murphy  
56<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jesse James".

Senator Jesse James  
23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District