



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Representative Mason Announces Wisconsin Jobs Initiative; *Legislation Will Train, Educate Thousands of Wisconsin Workers, Leverage At Least \$135 Million in Federal Funds*

Madison, WI - State Representative Cory Mason (D-Racine), proposed today the "Wisconsin Jobs Initiative." The bill was unveiled during a press conference Tuesday morning in the State Capitol. Representative Mason was joined by legislative colleagues including State Representatives Tamara Grigsby (D-Milwaukee) and Kim Hixson (D-Whitewater).

Representative Mason said, "Everywhere I turn in my district, people ask what can be done to get them back to work. What I am proposing today will train and educate at least 40,000 Wisconsin residents statewide and give employers the skilled workers they need."

Rep. Mason continued, "I am proud to stand with Wisconsin's struggling workers and businesses during these challenging economic times. The Wisconsin Jobs Initiative will enable us to invest in our most valuable resource: our workers. This proposal allows us to stand by the workers who built the Wisconsin economy and help them to transition into 21st century jobs."

Rep. Mason noted that Congress is poised to pass the American Graduation Initiative which would create matching grants to states that invest in their technical college systems. "With the matching funds from Congress, there is no better time to invest in our workers," said Rep. Mason.

The Wisconsin Jobs Initiative Will:

1) Provide job skills training and education to thousands of workers through a significant investment in Wisconsin's technical college system. This investment will also put Wisconsin first-in-line to apply for federal matching dollars made available by President Obama's American Graduation Initiative. It is estimated that Wisconsin would be eligible to receive at least \$135 million in federal matching dollars.

- 2) Grant financial aid to more than 20,000 waitlisted low-income Wisconsin students statewide so they can get the training and education they deserve from Wisconsin's UW and technical college campuses, or private and independent colleges and universities;
- 3) Direct the state Department of Commerce to award competitive grants to businesses to modernize their facilities and equipment, to ensure the retention and creation of 21st Century jobs; and
- 4) Enhance Wisconsin's Angel Investment Tax Credit program to support qualified new businesses, to continue to grow Wisconsin's economy.

Representative Mason was joined at the press conference by other legislative supporters including State Representative Tamara Grigsby (D-18th Assembly District) who will be one of the lead co-sponsors of the bill. "Investing in our economy means investing in our families," said Grigsby. "This bill will create new jobs for Wisconsin families by increasing access to the training and programs employers find attractive. In doing so, this serious job creation package is a major step forward in our efforts to strengthen our state's economy."

Representative Kim Hixson (D-43rd Assembly District) also intends to be one of the first co-sponsors of the Wisconsin Jobs Initiative. "The Janesville-area has seen some tough times in the last year and I want to make sure that I am doing everything that I can as a State Legislator to help create family-supporting jobs for the folks in south-central Wisconsin," Hixson said.

Representative Mason will circulate the bill for co-sponsorship today and expects a hearing to be held on the bill this fall. "I am looking forward to working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to quickly pass this important piece of legislation to quickly take advantage of this opportunity Congress and the President are giving us."

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