



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Bi-Partisan Employment First Bill Receives Public Hearing**

*Bill will promote state agency collaboration to enhance competitive integrated employment and workplace choice for people all across Wisconsin.*

**MADISON, Wis.** – The bi-partisan Employment First legislation, Assembly Bill (AB) 625/Senate Bill (SB) 514, authored by Representatives James Edming (R-Glen Flora) and Jimmy Anderson (D-Fitchburg) and Senator Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst) received a public hearing in both houses of the legislature today. This legislation promotes competitive integrated employment for persons with disabilities, while braiding financial resources and maximizing administrative capacity of state agencies to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities across Wisconsin.

“Inclusive workplaces require facilities that accommodate the needs and skills of everyone,” said Rep. Anderson. “Supporting community integrated employment and workplace choice is vital for our workforce and will lead to a more productive and inclusive business environment.”

Several state agencies have responsibilities to fund services to help youth and adults with disabilities find employment. However, there are times where these services are fragmented or duplicated. This legislation requires state agencies with responsibilities in this area to collaborate and develop a joint plan to assist people with disabilities in finding employment in the community.

“I am proud to be a co-author of this important legislation,” said Rep. Edming. “With the passage of this proposal, Wisconsin will lead the nation in promoting policies that assist people with disabilities in finding employment in the community.”

Wisconsin has outpaced the nation annually in its efforts to integrate individuals with disabilities into our workforce. Despite our best efforts, only 41% of all working-age Wisconsinites with disabilities are employed.

“I believe that we can do better,” said Sen. Tiffany. “By braiding resources and collaborating on the goal to improve rates of integrated employment, our agencies will be best equipped to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities wishing to enter the workforce.”

AB 625 and SB 514 now await further action of the legislative committees.

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