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State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Jim Doyle, Governor
Roberta Gassman, Secretary

August 18, 2010

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations and
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

I am writing on behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to share our input on a legislative matter that directly affects the agency's ability to carry out its most critical duty: Helping to put Wisconsin back to work. In particular, I am writing to share our opposition to the centralization of the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program as contained in S. 3686, the FY 2011 Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

This \$12 million reduction would diminish the accuracy and credibility of the CES program and degrade the ability of Wisconsin and other states to assist job seekers, local businesses, and policy makers. Especially during these challenging times for our nation's economy, states like Wisconsin need this vital funding to analyze and interpret employment data, providing one of the earliest indicators of economic conditions at the state and local level.

The CES program, which has been under the purview of states for some 50 years, is conducted by State Labor Market Information (LMI) analysts who survey businesses and produce state and metropolitan data on employment and earnings at detailed levels. The loss of these funds would greatly diminish my Department's knowledge of local labor markets, hindering our ability to forecast job growth across Wisconsin. That, in turn, would reduce our ability to efficiently structure and target job training and reemployment services and provide critically important regional labor market information to our employers, job seekers, policy-makers and the media. These drawbacks would represent real costs to this important program.

For these reasons, as you move to a full Committee mark-up of the Labor-HHS-Education bill next month, we ask for your help in removing the centralization provision. I thank you for taking this request under consideration.

I especially thank you for all you do, and have done, for Wisconsin and our nation. Your leadership has been extraordinary and you have made a remarkable difference in the lives of our citizens.

Best to you,

Roberta Gassman
Secretary

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*Best to you & many thanks!
for your service!*