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Wisconsin Fast Forward Bill Clears State Legislature

Legislation, part of Governor Walker's \$100 million workforce agenda, receives strong bipartisan support

MADISON – Following the Wisconsin Assembly's 94-4 approval last week, the Senate today concurred unanimously (33-0) on **Wisconsin Fast Forward** bill (AB 14 / SB 23), which Governor Walker announced early in February as part of his \$100 million agenda to develop the state's workforce.

Secretary Reggie Newson issued the following statement in reaction to the Legislature's approval of the bill, which now heads to the Governor's desk:

"I am pleased that the Wisconsin Legislature worked in a bipartisan manner to move this important bill through the legislative process, and to do it in an expeditious fashion given the immediate need to address the skills gap and train Wisconsin workers for jobs that are open today.

"The availability of flexible and customized training solutions, in addition to cutting-edge and real-time labor market information, will help us identify and respond to emerging industry needs, empower Wisconsinites to access good-paying jobs, and move Wisconsin's economy forward.

"I would especially like to thank State Representative Kathleen Bernier and Senators Rick Gudex and Robert Cowles for their leadership in introducing the legislation."

Highlights of the **Wisconsin Fast Forward** legislation include:

- \$15 million in state funded, DWD grants over the biennium to provide training to new and incumbent workers. The grants may require matching funds from businesses requesting the training.
- New Office of Skills Development at DWD to administer the worker training grants.
- New Labor Market Information System (LMIS) to track job vacancies and link unemployed workers to openings they are qualified to fill or to training to help them become qualified.