



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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To: Members, Joint Committee on Finance

From: Survival Coalition Co-Chairs
Lynn Breedlove, Disability Rights Wisconsin
Maureen Ryan, Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Inc.
Beth Swedeen, WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

**Subject: Executive Action on 2011-13 Biennial Budget May 26, 2011
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT- (Paper #810)**

The Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations urges the committee's support for appropriate allocation to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to promote the employment of people with disabilities. An analysis of trends from the Current Population Survey reveals strong evidence that the 2007-09 recession disproportionately affected workers with disabilities, resulting in a 9 percent decline in the presence of workers with disabilities in the labor force. Nationally the employment rate of working age persons in April 2011 was 70 percent for people without disabilities and just 20 percent for those with disabilities. Investments in the type of individualized employment supports provided by DVR are extremely important, particularly for the Governors' jobs agenda. Capturing the generous federal match for this highly successful program can be a key part of job creation in Wisconsin at the same time that it decreases unemployment for persons with disabilities and reduces reliance on public supports. Therefore, we request that the committee make decisions as outlined in the recommendations below.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Funding for Vocational Rehabilitation Case Service Aids (DWD) (Paper # 810)

Requested Action: Adopt Alternative #3

As indicated in Fiscal Bureau paper #810 (p. 4, #10) there are currently 4,446 eligible applicants with disabilities on a waiting list for Wisconsin DVR employment services. The annual cost per consumer in the DVR program is approximately \$3,046 and the estimated return on investment (calculated by DVR to show estimated annual earnings divided by the amount of funds invested into employment plan services) is approximately 196%. The generous federal match for this successful job creation program is 21.3% of state funds to 78.7% of federal funds (p. 2, #2). Based upon this data, we recommend Alternative #4 which captures all available federal matching funds and nearly eliminates the DVR wait list. This GPR investment, with its significant federal match, would serve approximately 6632 individuals over the biennium as compared to the amounts currently provided in the budget bill (p.5, #12). To leave federal job creation funds on the table in this economy and to risk federal penalties for not meeting Maintenance of Effort in this program is simply not good business.

For Further Information Contact Survival Coalition Co-Chairs:

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