



## State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

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Date: May 3, 2017

To: Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy

From: State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

RE: Assembly Bill 199

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Dear Chair Neylon and Committee Members:

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 199 which would provide technical educational equipment grants to local school districts.

I am introducing this legislation at the request of two manufacturers in my district in an effort to help attract and prepare high school students for careers in advanced manufacturing. As employers who are actively involved in building a skilled workforce, they recognize the importance of up-to-date equipment in our school shops and providing students with hands on experience.

Under this legislation, school districts could apply for a matching grant up to \$50,000. Schools would be required to secure a 2 to 1 match from non-state funds, with matching funds coming from collaborating manufacturers or businesses. To be eligible, schools must demonstrate a need and provide projected outcomes, and once grants are awarded, the grantee must report outcomes for 3 years.

This program is designed to promote greater participation in tech ed courses and careers in manufacturing. In addition, this program encourages schools to work in collaboration with local manufacturers to provide students with hands-on experience using up-to-date manufacturing equipment and software.

The program would be administered by the Department of Workforce Development. DWD would be directed to establish a committee of five individuals representing different job sectors and different geographic areas of the state. The committee would be responsible for establishing criteria on which grant applications would be considered. Grant applications could be considered at any time during the year. Grants awarded would be required to be spent within one year of receipt.

I urge your support for this legislation in our effort to encourage careers in technical education and to address our workforce needs. I would welcome the opportunity to respond to any questions you might have.



# Warren Petryk

State Representative • 93rd Assembly District

Date: May 3, 2017

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy

From: Representative Petryk

Re: Testimony regarding Assembly Bill 199 – Tech Ed Equipment Grant Bill

Good afternoon Chairman Neylon and members of the committee. I appreciate this opportunity to come before you today to enthusiastically speak in favor of Assembly Bill 199. I also want to thank Vice Chair Representative Ed Brooks and Representative Tittl for their support of this important piece of legislation.

As we all know, manufacturing has always been the backbone industry of Wisconsin. In today's technology-based world, this industry has evolved tremendously and more and more we hear from those experts and managers within the industry that they are in desperate need of qualified, skilled workers. Currently, there are not enough students enrolling in the types of educational courses that help fulfill this industry's desperate need for qualified employees. As the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Workforce Development, I am very pleased to co-author such a positive, pro-growth piece of legislation to help Wisconsin continue to move forward. This bill will provide significant State investment in the future hope of our State, our young people and their ability to become employed in highly rewarding careers in the technical trades.

Assembly Bill 199 will provide grants to school districts to encourage participation in technical education courses and ultimately, family-sustaining careers in manufacturing. Under our bill, a school district could apply for a matching grant ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Schools would need to secure matching funds from area private businesses and/or other community assistance. With these funds, schools would work in collaboration with local manufacturing businesses to provide students with the hands-on experience they require by using the grant funds to acquire the sophisticated high-tech equipment they will be utilizing when they enter advanced manufacturing fields. With this bill, we will become more able to help students transition into high-demand, good-paying jobs across Wisconsin.

The Department of Workforce Development would be responsible for administering this program and the Wisconsin Fast Forward program would receive an additional \$1 million per fiscal year 2017-18 and 2018-19 for this grant. Also, the bill requires the Department to establish a public and private sector Committee comprised of five people from the department, private organizations in advanced manufacturing, and anyone else the Secretary deems suitable for this Committee. This Committee would establish the grant criteria and would accept and award the grant applications.

Any school district that receives this grant will be required to file a report with the Department by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the first three fiscal years following the fiscal year in which the grant was awarded. Within this report, the school district will describe: how the money was used; the outcomes achieved; share best practices used by the school district regarding training of students; include a sustainability plan for the training; and provide any other details the Department may determine necessary under their promulgated rules.

Assembly Bill 199 would be a wonderful step toward helping Wisconsin meet the increasing skilled-worker demands that are ongoing in today's sophisticated and highly-technical manufacturing industry. I humbly ask for your support on this very important piece of legislation. Thank you for your kind attention.

## Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy

Representative Neylon (Chair)  
Representative Brooks (Vice-Chair)  
Representative Zimmerman  
Representative Kulp  
Representative Titl  
Representative Macco

Representative Snyder  
Representative Wichgers  
Representative Ohnstad  
Representative Stuck  
Representative Fields  
Representative Crowley

### Committee Clerk

Joe Zapf

### Testimony of Dan Conroy, Vice President of Human Resources (Ret.) Nexen Group, Inc.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this committee about **Assembly Bill 199**. I am excited about the good it will do, and enthusiastically endorse it.

Nexen is like so many advanced manufacturers located all over Wisconsin. We benefit from the great people, great schools, Midwestern work ethic and quality of life that Wisconsin offers. We have been successful because of our investment and embrace of the latest technology. We provide high paying jobs, and that's good for local economy and the state economy overall.

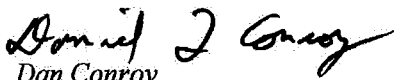
Highly skilled jobs like CNC Machinists, Maintenance Technicians, Precision Welders, Engineers, etc. are in high demand, and job openings often go unfilled because qualified applicants are not available. We believe more individuals would attend our technical colleges and universities for these careers if they had a better chance to experience in tech-ed.

Our middle school and high school tech-ed programs try to get by within their school budgets, but too often their labs and work areas are ill equipped. We have seen first hand how a tech-ed program can re-invent it self, and really engage students if they partner with local businesses, and modernize their shop.

Nexen has partnered with numerous school districts in this regard. Tiger Manufacturing in Webster, and Cardinal Manufacturing in Eleva-Strum are leading edge examples of vibrant and engaged tech-ed programs, and have received state and national recognition. The success of these programs goes beyond learning these skills and experiencing potential career futures. Students learn the soft skills like communication, teamwork, problem solving, work effort, etc. that employers so want to see. The students gain confidence and a deeper understanding of what matters in the real world.

AB199 is designed to help forge partnerships between business, community and schools to invest in Career and Technical Education. We have witnessed firsthand what an amazing transformation can take place in Career and Technical Education with thoughtful investment in their equipment. This bill can do good things for schools and communities across the state. It is good for students and their teachers, it is good for businesses, it is good for communities, and it is good for the state's economy. I encourage your support and passage of this bill.

Kind Regards,



Dan Conroy  
Vice President of Human Resources (Ret.)  
Nexen Group, Inc.

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Scott Walker, Governor  
Ray Allen, Secretary

## **Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy Testimony on Assembly Bill 199**

### **Andrew Evenson, Legislative Liaison, Department of Workforce Development**

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Chairperson Neylon and members of the Assembly Committee:

I am Andrew Evenson, the Legislative Liaison for the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). On behalf of DWD, I would like to thank you for allowing me to testify for information only.

Governor Walker says workforce development is economic development. As we help employers find skilled workers to fill their labor market needs, we also give them the confidence to take on additional work and expand operations in Wisconsin. This leads to job creation and, ultimately, even more opportunity for Wisconsin's workers.

Thanks to Governor Walker and the support of our partners in the Legislature, more people in Wisconsin are employed than ever before and experiencing the dignity that comes with earning a paycheck. Our Unemployment is at 3.4 percent, a rate that had not been achieved since April of 2000. These strong economic indicators also point to challenges facing our state. Employers are struggling to find skilled talent to fill good-paying jobs. DWD's top priority is to continue to use the funds provided by Governor Walker and the Legislature to make smart, strategic investments in solutions to meet employers' labor market needs.

The legislation before you today, Assembly Bill 199 increases Wisconsin Fast Forward's appropriation \$1 million per year to allocate to school districts for the purchase of technical education equipment that is used in advanced manufacturing fields. Related software and any instructional material necessary to train pupils in the operation of the equipment would also be an allowable expenditure. The grants will be no less than \$10,000 and no more than \$50,000 resulting in between 20 and 100 grants per year. The grants must be matched dollar for dollar in the form of money contributed from private sources or in-kind services or both.

DWD would create an advisory committee to review and administer the grant program which will include representatives of private organizations engaged in advanced manufacturing. Grant procedures would be developed by the Department through administrative rule process. School districts would be required to report outcomes back to DWD by September 1st for 3 years. A grant tracking system would need to be developed at DWD which is estimated to cost \$187,000. Staff and program support costs for the program would be \$127,500 annually. AB 199 does not include any position authority or administrative funding.

I would be happy to answer any technical questions you may have. Thank you again for your time and for the opportunity to testify today.