

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Senate Journal

One-Hundred and Sixth Regular Session

MONDAY, April 8, 2024

The Chief Clerk made the following entries under the above date.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Office of the Governor

April 8, 2024

The Honorable, the Senate:

I am vetoing **Senate Bill 436** in its entirety.

This bill eliminates the requirement for employers to obtain work permits to employ minors who are 14 or 15 years old, for employers to obtain street trade permits to employ minors, and for minors to obtain identification cards to work in street trades. The bill also eliminates provisions relating the issuance of certificates of age, eliminates provisions authorizing the collection of fees for the issuance of work and street trade permits and certificates of age, and modifies certain penalty provisions relating to injuries sustained by minors who are illegally employed to reflect the elimination of permit requirements.

Wisconsin faces generational challenges recruiting, training, and retaining talented workers. A year ago, our state unemployment rate hit a record-low of 2.4 percent. Last year, Wisconsin had the all-time lowest number of unemployed workers ever in modern history. And our state's labor force participation rate also consistently remained above the national average throughout the year. Wisconsinites work hard, and they are working. Wisconsin needs real, meaningful, and long-term solutions to address our state's pressing workforce challenges, improve our ability to retain and recruit talented workers, and ensure our workforce and our economy are prepared to meet the demands of the 21st Century.

Asking more kids to work is not a serious plan or solution to address our statewide workforce issues.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to eliminating a process that ensures our kids are protected from

employers that may exploit youth and inexperience or subject children to hazardous or illegal working conditions.

The stated justification of this bill is to ensure parents are involved in the decision-making process regarding a job for their child; however, currently, the law requires parents to have such involvement because the minor's parent or guardian must consent to the employment. This bill eliminates a process that ensures parents and guardians have knowledge of employment so they can, in their judgment, determine whether a job may be detrimental to their young worker's health, safety, social development, or academic success.

Street trade jobs pose heightened dangers to child workers. Youth who are hired to sell or solicit door-to-door often are unsupervised while interacting with strangers. Therefore, currently, minors working in street trades must obtain an identification card from the department or a designee, which in turn provides the department with enhanced ability to ensure minors are not working outside of prohibited hours or if their welfare, school attendance, or academic performance is negatively affected by the job. This bill repeals the requirement that minors obtain an identification card to engage in street trades, and I object to eliminating the department's ability to track and monitor these kids and their employment. Although it was 25 years ago, the tragedy of the 1999 van accident that killed six young people and rendered a 15-year-old girl a quadriplegic continues to be a reminder that we must fiercely protect child workers because not all employers have kids' best interests in mind.

The bill further weakens child labor protections by eliminating child labor permit fees. These fees currently support a position at the Department of Workforce Development that helps monitor compliance with child labor laws. I object to defunding this position. For all of these reasons, I am vetoing this bill to retain current law protections for child workers.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor