



BRAD PFAFF
STATE SENATOR

TO: Senate Committee on Insurance and Small Business
FROM: Senator Brad Pfaff
DATE: December 6, 2023
SUBJECT: Testimony on Senate Bill 463

Thank you Chairwoman Felzkowski and members of the Committee on Insurance and Small Business for holding this public hearing on Senate Bill 463. This bill is about supporting small businesses across Wisconsin.

Wisconsin is a small business state. This is clearly shown by the fact that nearly half of the state's workforce is employed by a small business and there are more small businesses being created right now in Wisconsin compared to before 2020.

As I travel across my district in western Wisconsin, I hear from small business owners asking for tools to start and grow their business. Entrepreneurs have a vision and know how to get things done, and this bill is one piece in starting a business, helping it grow, and creating jobs.

This bill is straight-forward. It directs the Department of Administration to establish and maintain a "one-stop shop" portal for the most common small business needs. It would feature information on economic development programs, bidding opportunities for small businesses to participate in state and local government contracts, courses of instruction, and networking opportunities. Currently, many state agencies provide these tools; this bill essentially consolidates this information.

There are many resources across state government to assist small business owners succeed. Making sure these resources are available in one place will allow small business owners to get back to what they do best, which is providing goods and services to customers, providing jobs, creating and growing a market, and serving their communities.

Small businesses are the cornerstone of our communities, and our economy thrives when our Main Streets thrive. This legislation can help make that happen.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this legislation. I am happy to answer any questions.



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

Rep. Robyn Vining and Rep. Francesca Hong

Joint Testimony in Support of SB 463



Over 99% of businesses in Wisconsin are small businesses!

- Wisconsin is a small business state, yet starting, running, or growing a small business can be unnecessarily difficult.
- It can take up to ten different websites to address all the needs of a small business.
- Wisconsin has these different resources, but the information is not centralized.

Here's how our bill makes life easier for small businesses:

Senate Bill 463 creates a one-stop opportunity shop that streamlines the process businesses have with state agencies, providing small business owners with an easy-to-use resource that saves them time and money. With this portal, small business owners will be able to access information on:

- State and local government bidding opportunities
- Economic development programs
- Educational and networking opportunities
- Licensing or permit requirements
- Taxes and fees associated with their businesses

Senate Bill 463 could also save Wisconsin taxpayers money.

- Small businesses can see bidding opportunities from all across Wisconsin—from the state level to the village level.
- Increased exposure to bidding opportunities can lead to more bids, which could in turn drive down costs and save taxpayer money. That's a win for the small businesses, the local municipalities, and the taxpayers—Win-Win-Win!

When we go big for small businesses, small business families can invest more time in their businesses and families, rather than navigating the complex web of information they need to start or maintain their small businesses. SB 463 is a win for small businesses, a win for Wisconsin families, and a win for Wisconsin taxpayers. We ask that you support SB 463 in this committee and on the Senate floor, so we can move Wisconsin forward, *together!*



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What small business owners have to say about SB 463:

Irene Strohbeen, owner of Strohbeen and Associates, Appleton

“It’s hard enough to establish and manage a small business. This portal would make it so much easier for business owners to find the resources and state agencies needed, demonstrating Wisconsin’s support to small businesses.”

Chef Dan Jacobs, owner of Dan Dan, Milwaukee

“A more streamlined process to opening your business helps everyone get back to work, generate revenue, and that includes the state.”

Becky Cooper Clancy, owner of Bounce MKE, Milwaukee

“The biggest challenge to opening a new business is tracking down information from different sources and agencies. Having a clearinghouse for resources and information would streamline the process for entrepreneurs and accelerate business growth throughout the state.”

Chef Dave Heide, owner of Liliana’s and Little John’s, Madison

“Why have we created barriers, and additional hurdles for small businesses, when we already have so much to do, with such limited time and resources. This bill is going to be at least a small way to say “we support small business in Wisconsin, and want to help you to succeed”.

Patrick DePula, Salvatore’s Tomato Pies, Madison

“This legislation is long overdue. Small business has historically been overlooked while we spend enormous resources on big business with dubious returns...this bill is definitely a step in the right direction.”

AJ Dixon, Lazy Susan MKE, Milwaukee

“As a small business owner myself, having a ‘one stop shop for all’ would have been imperative when I had first opened. Giving much needed tools in a more accessible way to small businesses ensures a better path to success.”



**Statement Before the
Senate Committee on Insurance and Small Business**

By

**Bill G. Smith
State Director
National Federation of Independent Business
Wisconsin**

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Senate Bill 463

I regret a scheduling conflict prevents me from attending today's hearing for Senate Bill 463. I am pleased to convey NFIB's support for passage of this important proposal. Senate Bill 463 would consolidate and simplify access to several key areas of information relative to our state's small business community, including economic development programs, assistance with government purchasing, licensing, permitting, and taxes and fees information from state and local governments.

These are all valuable tools of information that will improve the creation and help promote the growth of Wisconsin's small business economy.

According to the SBA's Office of Advocacy, the opening of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses increased Wisconsin's workforce by an additional 266,651 jobs between March 2021 and March 2022, a net increase of 80,240 jobs.

Small businesses provided 82.7 percent of the increase in employment opportunities in job growth during this period. Since 97 percent of businesses in Wisconsin employ 0-20 workers, the small business portal would serve a broad range of small firms located throughout the state.

Senate Bill 463 would help eliminate some bureaucratic barriers to job creation and growth by providing a one stop portal to efficiently provide important information vital to start-ups and on-going entrepreneurs.

On behalf of Wisconsin's small and independent business community, we commend Senator Pfaff and Representative Vining for bringing this proposal forward, and I respectfully urge members of the committee to take favorable action toward passage of Senate Bill 463.

Thank you for your consideration.

**National Federation of Independent Business in Wisconsin
10 East Doty Street, Suite 519 – Madison, WI 53703 - 608/255-6083 – www.nfib.com/wi**