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January 22, 2009

Ms. Roberta Gassman, Secretary
Department of Workforce Development
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946

Dear Secretary Gassman:

We are writing in our capacity as chair and vice chair of the Joint Legislative Council's Special Committee on Building Wisconsin's Workforce. The Special Committee recognizes the importance of credentialing or certification as a means to address workforce needs. This letter sets forth a committee recommendation regarding this issue.

Credentialing or certification allows workers to gain and demonstrate knowledge and skills and allows employers to attract qualified workers in a more efficient manner. At the Special Committee's July 21, 2008 meeting, you described the Manufacturing Skills Standards Certification program, which provides workers with skills for manufacturing occupations. You noted that the Governor has set a goal of certifying 40% of the manufacturing workforce by 2016 as part of his Grow Wisconsin plan. The Special Committee recommends that the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) use credentialing or certification programs as a means to address workforce needs.

The Special Committee hopes that DWD will make the use of credentialing or certification a top priority as DWD continues to address workforce needs in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have questions, please contact Jessica Karls or Scott Grosz, Legislative Council Staff Attorneys.

Sincerely,

Representative Pat Strachota
Chair, Special Committee on
Building Wisconsin's Workforce

Senator Robert Wirth
Vice Chair, Special Committee on
Building Wisconsin's Workforce

PS:RW:ksm

cc: Gary Denis, Bureau of Workforce Training, DWD
Hector Colon, Executive Assistant, DWD