

Dear

The Conference Committee is currently negotiating the final state budget bill. The Assembly version contains a provision that will help make Wisconsin healthier and I ask you to encourage your representatives on the Conference Committee to include it in the final budget bill.

The Workplace Wellness tax credit would allow businesses to claim a 30% tax credit for the implementing and expanding a workplace wellness program. The provision calls for \$5 million, which will be split between large and small employers, to be allocated annually beginning in 2009 (Fiscal effect in this biennium: \$2 million).

Wellness programs have proven to be a valuable tool for businesses to reduce their health care costs with companies seeing average returns of \$3 in savings for every \$1 invested. However, the initial start up cost for many business owners is prohibitive. By creating this incentive, the state of Wisconsin can show it is serious about creating a healthier, more productive workforce.

Workplace Wellness programs work by first assessing an individual's risk with a Health Risk Assessment and then put them on the path to better health through programs such as: smoking cessation, weight management, stress management, nutrition education, worker injury prevention, and health and fitness programs. Through wellness programs, not only do companies have a healthier workforce, they also see greater productivity, reductions in absenteeism, and a better work environment.

I urge your support of workplace wellness programs and encourage you to fight for this provision to be included in the final budget bill.

Sincerely,