



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Members of Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: John Huebscher, Executive Director

DATE: May 21, 2007

RE: Real Work, Real Pay Demonstration Project

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference urges the Committee to fund the Real Work, Real Pay Demonstration Project.

The Project would provide up to 500 individuals with real wages and work, a mentor to help them succeed, and a real possibility of maintaining their employment once the demonstration project's six months are completed.

As we compare this Demonstration Project to the other kinds of work placements currently being utilized by the DWD, it seems clear that providing W-2 clients with real wages and real jobs not only would enable participants to gain a more realistic employment experience than is currently the case with many of DWD's job placements, but it would also confer greater dignity on the workers.

Furthermore, as the Legislative Fiscal Bureau paper #888 indicates, there is empirical evidence from Minnesota that this type of employment experience has better outcomes for participants than existing job placements. As our state seeks to help its unemployed poor move from dependency to work, it must adopt practices that truly enable participants to succeed in their quest for financial independence.

One of the principles of Catholic social teaching is the dignity of work and the rights of workers. This teaching holds that to engage in meaningful work is both a duty and a right. Work is both a means of acquiring material necessities and an expression of a person's creative abilities. Through work, individuals contribute not just to their own betterment, but to that of the common good.

For these all these reasons, we hope the Committee will fund this Project.

Thank you for your consideration.