



TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education

FROM: Rachel Ver Velde, Director of Workforce, Education and Employment Policy

DATE: February 16, 2022

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 967 & Assembly Bill 968

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Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Assembly Bill 967 and Assembly 968. We thank Representative Wittke and Senator Darling for authoring these bills, which will expand high-performing charter schools throughout Wisconsin.

WMC is the largest general business association in Wisconsin, representing approximately 3,800 member companies of all sizes, and from every sector of the economy. Since 1911, our mission has been to make Wisconsin the most competitive state in the nation to do business. That mission includes making sure Wisconsin's youth are able to access to a good education so they are ready to participate in the workforce.

Assembly Bill 967 helps accomplish this goal by requiring that the contract between a charter school governing board and a school board allow the governing board to open additional charter schools if all of the current charter schools operating under the board are high performing. Assembly Bill 968 creates the Charter School Authorizing Board, attached to the Department of Public Instruction. This board will be able to approve charter school applications. These bills help circumvent bureaucratic hurdles and streamline the process to allow more charter schools to open throughout Wisconsin.

WMC supports expanding the authorizers of charter schools. We believe that Wisconsin charter schools are providing innovative solutions for students, including meeting community and student needs that many traditional public schools are unable to fulfill. Many employers are excited about charter schools that are incorporating career pathways, career and technical training and hands-on experiences into their curriculum. As Wisconsin employers are facing severe worker shortages, these innovative programs will help attract young people into high-demand, well-paying jobs that employers currently are unable to fill.

WMC urges Members of the Assembly Committee on Education to vote in favor of Assembly Bill 967 and Assembly Bill 968 to ensure our state's youth have access to increased educational opportunities.