



# ACE

## ASSOCIATION OF CAREER EMPLOYEES

Post Office Box 44578

Madison, WI 53744

Voice: (608) 848-9008

Fax: 848-9266

Email: [ace@wiscow.com](mailto:ace@wiscow.com)

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September 27, 2023

Joint Committee on Employment Relations  
Co-Chairs and Members  
Room 113 South, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Joint Committee on Employment Relations Co-Chairs and Members:

The Association of Career Employees (ACE) has advocated for fair compensation for state employees since the 1970s. The ACE Board members strongly believe in compensation which is equivalent to positions in the private sector and adequate compensation when there are not equivalent positions. We believe this facilitates hiring in accordance with merit based civil service recruiting methods and assures that the State of Wisconsin is served by the best and most qualified employees. Therefore, we are taking the opportunity to comment on the 2023-2025 State of Wisconsin Compensation Plan.

The proposed Compensation Plan represents the State's best effort in coping with a difficult recruiting and retention environment, and we hope that the Committee will approve it promptly. With a phenomenally low unemployment rate of 2.6 and an aging workforce, the State has the challenge of competing with many large private employers. While we support the proposed General Wage Adjustments (GWA) of 4% and 2% for the respective fiscal years, we must emphasize that these increases are minimal compared with recent inflation in the cost of living. Since 2010, the Consumer Price Index has grown by a cumulative 31.33% while general wage adjustments have grown by 12%. This is a cumulative loss of 19.33% in the value of state wages. In addition, increases in health care premiums further chip away at the value of state wages.

It appears to us that because of the insufficient raises in the past, the State has been forced by severe attrition and recruiting difficulties to apply scattered patches to the pay plan only after problems become obvious. This approach of delayed responses to compensation needs is bound to produce more attrition, much higher training costs and a state workforce with dwindling expertise.

Therefore, the narrowly targeted pay progression and market increases contained in the proposal are critical to avoid crippling staff shortages in many of the services relied on by our citizens.

We encourage the Committee to speedily adopt all provisions offered by the Division of Personnel Management including the GWA increases, extensive pay progression improvements, market adjustments, travel reimbursement increases and changes to the pay schedules.

Sincerely,

*Sally Drew*

Sally Drew  
President, Association of Career Employees