

MADISON - Employment for ex-felons should always be a bi-partisan issue. That's why I am excited to co-author a bill that will remove barriers that prevent people who have been convicted of a crime from finding work.

Assembly Bill 614 was introduced by Rep. Dave Knudson, passed in the Assembly last month and had a hearing in the Senate this week. This bill will allow a person who has been convicted of a nonviolent crime to apply for a certificate of qualification for employment (CQE).

This certificate removes many sanctions that come with a conviction and can prevent a person from being hired. Unemployment rates for ex-felons can be as high as 60-70% and men with convictions account for about 34% of all nonworking men from ages 25-54. Also, formerly incarcerated people with one year of employment had a 16% recidivism rate over three years compared to 52.3% recidivism in three years among un-employed ex-convicts.