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Governor's Task Force on Minority Unemployment to Meet, Develop Plan to Boost Employment in Milwaukee Area

Bipartisan panel of top leaders to set agenda during initial meeting April 25, identify next steps

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced the first meeting of Governor Walker's Task Force on Minority Unemployment will be at 8 a.m. Wednesday, April 25, at the Northcott Neighborhood House, 2460 N. 6th Street, Milwaukee.

"The high minority unemployment in the Milwaukee community demands solutions now, and I am confident that the stakeholders comprising this bipartisan task force can work together to get results that will reduce unemployment, especially of minority males in Milwaukee," Secretary Newson said. "Governor Walker, along with Lieutenant Governor Kleefisch, are committed to attaining these goals to improve economic development, support entrepreneurship, strengthen workforce training, promote personal responsibility and strengthen families in Milwaukee."

The task force will operate as part of the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment to develop strategies and action steps that address minority unemployment, including the rates of black male employment in metro Milwaukee, which a recent University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee study stated was 44.7 percent for working-age black males ages 16 to 64 in 2010.

CWI Chairman Tim Sullivan said, "The Council on Workforce Investment is committed to advancing a world-class workforce system, and reducing minority unemployment in Milwaukee is critical component of this effort. The work of this Task Force will add much value to the strength of our state's economic picture."

Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and state Representative Elizabeth Coggs, a Milwaukee Democrat, are co-chairs of the task force. Gerard Randall, former president of the Private Industry Council, will serve as vice chair. Remaining members include Walker Administration Cabinet members, state Representatives from both political parties and a variety of Milwaukee-area community leaders with strong backgrounds in both employment and minority issues.

"I look forward to working with Representative Coggs along with other Task Force members to recommend steps to combat the high unemployment rate of minorities in the Milwaukee area," Lt. Governor Kleefisch said.

Representative Coggs added: "This is a call to action to make real change that will address the crisis of black male unemployment in Milwaukee. I am eager to make progress through the work of this Task Force."

During its initial meeting April 25, members will discuss the group's purpose and scope, highlight areas of expertise represented on the panel, and solidify next steps toward recommending a skills pipeline to connect unemployed minorities with employment opportunities in the Milwaukee area.