

**Department of Workforce Development**  
**Secretary's Office**  
201 East Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7946  
Madison, WI 53707-7946  
Telephone: (608) 266-3131  
Fax: (608) 266-1784  
Email: [dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us)  
Website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>



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Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Contact: Dick Jones, Acting Director of Communications, 608-266-6753

## **Secretary Gassman meets apprentices restoring Milwaukee City Hall** ***Highlights Governor's Opportunity Budget for all working families in city hall visit***

**Milwaukee** – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman said today during a visit to City Hall that Governor Doyle's opportunity budget will help create jobs and provide tax relief for Wisconsin's working families, benefiting families like those of the apprentices and co-workers in the skilled construction trades restoring the historic building.

"Governor Doyle's budget is not a big oil or big tobacco budget, but one for the hardworking men and women of this state and their families," Secretary Gassman said. "This budget continues the successful Grow Wisconsin strategy of investing in people, their education and training, to further grow our economy and create jobs. More importantly, it provides relief to middle class families squeezed by high costs and those working hard to get ahead, join the middle class and live the American dream."

Secretary Gassman said Governor Doyle's budget is a fiscally responsible, balanced plan that will make Wisconsin the national leader in health care reform with coverage for all children and affordable health care accessible to virtually all citizens. She said his budget also provides more than a dozen tax cuts to help working families, saving \$1.7 billion in the next four years. In particular, she highlighted a full deduction for health insurance premiums; college tuition deduction, including books and fees, saving families as much as \$400 a year; a child care tax deduction, saving parents up to \$400 a year; and an end to the state tax on Social Security benefits next year.

During her visit to City Hall, Secretary Gassman met with workers, including apprentices, involved in the \$70 million restoration project. She complimented them on their work and praised contractor J.P. Cullen for exceeding hiring and subcontracting goals for minorities and women. She noted J.P. Cullen voluntarily committed to goals above those specified in the project. The contractor set its own goal of a 25% minority workforce and exceeded that by nearly 10%.

"Wisconsin was the first state with an apprenticeship program, and this on-the-job training program is nearly as old as city hall," Secretary Gassman said. "So it's great to see apprentices, their instructors and co-workers restoring this grand building to its original luster as they begin new careers and build a bright future for themselves and their families."

Before visiting city hall, Secretary Gassman stopped in Racine to announce a \$125,000 grant to fund a special effort by the Regional Workforce Alliance to meet the need for welders and metal fabricators in metropolitan Milwaukee and throughout the seven-county region of southeastern Wisconsin.

The grant is from nearly \$714,000 in federal Workforce Investment Act incentive funding that Wisconsin has received for exceeding performance standards such as job placement after training, job retention and improvement in literacy. Of 23 states to receive incentive funding awards, only 8 received more than Wisconsin.