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Testimony on Senate Bills 232 & 233
Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing, and Forestry
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Thank you Chairwoman Felzkowski, Vice-Chairman Stafsholt, and members of the Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing, and Forestry for accepting my testimony in favor of Senate Bills 232 and 233 today. Additionally, I would like to thank Senator Kooyenga and Representatives Horlacher and Petryk for authoring these important pieces of legislation.

WILL has previously conducted research on the effects of occupational licensing laws in Wisconsin and has found that state barriers lead to [lower employment in licensed professions](#); and, that licensing laws had no [discernible effect on safety](#) in specific professions. In 1950, just 1 in 20 workers required a license to work. Today, close to 1 in 4 Wisconsin workers require a license to practice their profession. Such licensing pathways have many unintended and harmful effects on individuals, especially those in lower income positions, despite widespread empirical evidence from scholars across the political spectrum.

Senate Bills 232 and 233 would represent an important step in streamlining the license issuance process in Wisconsin. With businesses around the state looking for workers, the timing is more important than ever to address potential logjams that prevent people from pursuing their profession in a timely manner. Currently, potential licensees most often wait for a credentialing board to take action before they are able to work. Some boards, meet quite infrequently, which can exacerbate the delays that licensees experience. For example, the Auctioneer Board meets quarterly. So, any issues that arise with licenses would force applicants to wait for a significant period of time before working.

Senate Bill 232 creates a process for the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) to issue temporary provisional licenses for individuals going through their initial licensure process. Backlogs for processing of initial licenses have been well documented and this bill offers a simple solution to the problem.

Allowing an otherwise qualified individual to practice in the profession makes sense at this time. However, the legislature should continue to explore removing burdensome barriers that serve little purpose to protecting public health and safety.

Senate Bill 233 allows a credentialing board to delegate their authority to issue credentials to DPS. This move is advisable because the department has the ability and capacity to process credentials in a timelier manner than credentialing boards that do not meet as regularly. This allows workers to gain employment without unnecessary delay. The vast majority of applicants have no issues with their application, so waiting for a board to act is unnecessary. Furthermore,

having the request approved by the tenth day (at the very latest) ensures efficiency. All of this decreases limitations and barriers, while opening opportunities in the workforce. Considering the impact the pandemic has had on employment in Wisconsin, it would be in the state's best interest to pass both of these bills. Thank you for your time.

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