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## **Walker says right-to-work will be a draw for companies to move into the state**

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MILWAUKEE -- With right-to-work legislation moving quickly through the Legislature, Gov. Scott Walker is stressing the positive impact of bill on job creation.

That's a departure from two months ago when he suggested the legislation would have minimal impact compared to other economic development tools.

And Dems in Madison slammed Walker for reversing course on the issue.

Speaking to reporters Thursday after addressing the Manufacturing Matters! conference in Milwaukee, Walker called right-to-work a "top of the list" draw for out-of-state and overseas manufacturers.

"Whether or not a state has freedom-to-work legislation is one of the key factors they look at," Walker said. "You can almost guarantee any group that asks you wants to know what your law is in that regard. It's not the only factor but it certainly is high, high on their list. It may not be the reason you get it, but more often than not, it's a disqualifier if you don't."

Asked how highly he would rank right-to-work, Walker replied, "Let me give you the chart, it's one of the top things."

In December, Walker said following the Future Wisconsin Economic Summit in Milwaukee that he hoped legislators would focus on priorities other than right-to-work. At the time, he downplayed arguments that right-to-work would boost job creation, saying factors in right-to-work states such as tax burden and the regulatory climate were "probably as much, if not more so, reasons" why their economies had been growing. ([Listen to audio from December](#))

Asked yesterday what made him change his mind, Walker noted he had been a co-sponsor of similar legislation as a state lawmaker.

"So my position hasn't really changed," he added. "It's just a matter of priority and timing."

"I didn't think, in my last term, particularly in the years immediately following Act 10 reforms and the reaction to that, that we needed to go through that kind

of debate and that kind of battle in the state of Wisconsin," he said. "I thought about the importance of sending a message of stability to job creators in the state. I thought it was important to get back to steady-as-you-go, moving forward."

\* [Listen to Thursday's press conference](#)

Earlier, in remarks to the manufacturing conference attendees, Walker stressed the importance of "investing in human capital as well as physical capital," such as manufacturing equipment.

He urged attendees to contact school boards in their communities and insist they change school district websites to reflect the percentage of graduates who go on to two-year technical colleges.

"I think that sends a powerful message ... that we value our sons and daughters just as much who choose to be highly skilled welders, machinists and fabricators as we do other sons and daughters who choose to be doctors and lawyers," said Walker.

Walker emphasized his world travel since becoming governor, noting he has been to China and the United Kingdom.

He also talked about an [April trade mission he plans to lead to Germany, France and Spain](#).

During the trade mission, which runs April 12-20, each participating company will have scheduled individualized meetings with companies whose needs or capabilities align with their company's exporting objectives -- whether the meetings be with end users, distributors or other market intermediaries. In addition, Walker will participate in events to promote Wisconsin business partnerships.

The trip will kick off with a visit to the Hannover Messe Trade Show, which focuses on industrial automation and machinery and draws companies from around the world. After three days in Germany, the delegation will travel to Bilbao, Spain; and Montpellier, France. The registration deadline for the trip is March 13.

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*For WisBusiness.com*