



EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

Press Releases



Contact: Press Office (202) 226-9440

House Approves Job Training Reform Legislation

SKILLS Act will strengthen workforce development system and help put Americans back to work

WASHINGTON, D.C. | March 15, 2013 - The U.S. House of Representatives today approved the *Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills Act* (H.R. 803). Sponsored by Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC), the legislation will help workers access the education and training they need to compete in today's economy.

"After a decade of debate and delay, Congress is another step closer to approving comprehensive job training reform legislation," **said Chairman Kline**. "At a time when 12 million Americans are unemployed and the national debt is spiraling out of control, workers and taxpayers can no longer afford the failed status quo. The SKILLS Act will remove the bloated bureaucracy standing between job seekers and the training they need to get back to work. It is time for the Senate to act so reform can become reality."

"I am delighted the House has advanced the SKILLS Act," **said Rep. Foxx**. "Americans deserve a workforce development system that is more efficient, more accountable, and more responsive to the needs of our workplaces. This important legislation heeds the president's call to cut through the maze of confusing and ineffective workforce development programs. We must ensure taxpayer dollars are supporting workers instead of unnecessary bureaucracy. I urge our Senate colleagues to put forward their own ideas and help move this process forward."

Support for this important legislation continues to grow; governors, community colleges, and job creators have endorsed reforms in the SKILLS Act. As approved by the House, H.R. 803 will:

- Eliminate and streamline 35 duplicative and ineffective employment and training programs.
- Replace the current maze of programs with a flexible Workforce Investment Fund to provide workers, employers, and job seekers one simple source of support.
- Establish common performance measures for state and local leaders and require an independent evaluation of programs at least once every five years to improve accountability.
- Require local workforce investment leaders to outline the strategies they will implement to serve at-risk youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and other workers with unique barriers to employment.

To learn more about the *SKILLS Act*, [click here](#).

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The Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills (SKILLS) Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. | February 21, 2013 -

THE PROBLEM:

Roughly 12 million Americans are unemployed and searching for work, yet the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports millions of job openings remain unfilled. One reason for this startling fact is a broken workforce development system. Despite a multi-billion dollar annual taxpayer investment in federal job training programs, employers continue to struggle to find workers with skills necessary to fill in-demand jobs. An unwieldy workforce training system is making it more difficult for workers to access important job skills and assistance, and fails employers who seek a highly trained workforce.

During his 2012 State of the Union address, President Obama recognized the problem and said he wanted to "cut through the maze of confusing [job] training programs" and create "one program" for workers to find the help they need. Unfortunately, more than a year later the president has not outlined a responsible plan that achieves his goal. Congress and the American people can no longer wait for the president to lead on the job training reforms we need.

THE SOLUTION:

As our nation continues to struggle with high unemployment and unsustainable debt, streamlining ineffective programs and promoting better use of taxpayer dollars is critical. However, we have to do more than simply root out ineffective programs. The Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills (SKILLS) Act will empower employers, rein in bureaucracy, and provide America's workers with a more dynamic, flexible, and effective network of job training services.

THE SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND INVESTING IN LIFELONG SKILLS (SKILLS) ACT

Streamlines and Eliminates Ineffective Programs

- As approved by the committee, the SKILLS Act eliminates and streamlines 35 ineffective and duplicative programs, including 26 identified in a 2011 report by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office. The proposal creates a flexible Workforce Investment Fund to serve as a single source of support for workers, employers, and job seekers.
- The proposal empowers state governors to consolidate additional employment and training programs and services at the state level for the express purpose to improve administrative efficiency, further eliminating waste and improving support for workers.

Empowers Job Creators and Promotes Accountability

- The SKILLS Act strengthens the role of employers in workforce development decisions by requiring two-thirds of workforce board members be employers and focuses training on in-demand occupations.
- The proposal requires state and local leaders to use a set of common performance measures for services offered to workers, improving accountability and protecting taxpayer dollars.

Cuts Through the Bureaucracy

- The SKILLS Act eliminates arbitrary roadblocks that prevent workers from accessing job training immediately, and helps ensure support is tailored to the specific needs of individual workers.
- State and local workforce investment boards are responsible for policy and oversight of employment and training services. The proposal repeals 19 mandates affecting who can serve on the boards and empowers state and local officials to appoint the remaining members.