



Federal Legislative Update

Quarter 4, December 2018



Introduction

The Texas Workforce Investment Council's *Federal Legislative Update* is published on a quarterly basis and informs stakeholders about developments in federal legislation that may impact workforce policy for Texas. The 115th Congress, Second Session, concluded on January 3, 2019, and the 116th Congress also convened on January 3, 2019.

Recent Highlights from Congress

Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act

On July 31, 2018, President Trump signed the Perkins V bill, which reauthorizes the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

The legislation is bipartisan and will help individuals enter the workforce with the knowledge and skills needed to compete for in-demand jobs. The bill also:

- provides more flexibility in using federal resources,
- supports innovative learning opportunities and addresses state and local needs,
- increases transparency and accountability, and
- ensures the federal role is limited.

Innovations in Mentoring, Training, and Apprenticeships Act

On December 31, 2018, President Trump signed the Innovations in Mentoring, Training, and Apprenticeships Act, which directs the National Science Foundation to provide grants for research about STEM education approaches and the STEM-related workforce.

The legislation is bipartisan and is co-sponsored by Rep. Lamar Smith (TX-21) and Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30). The new legislation will allow the development of grants to be awarded to junior or community colleges to increase the participation in STEM associate degree or certification programs for in-demand industry sectors and/or occupations. This act also allows grants to be awarded to institutions of higher education who partner with private sector employers or industry partnerships that commit to offering apprenticeships, internships, research opportunities, or applied learning to students enrolled in identified baccalaureate STEM degree programs.

Labor

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released a September 2018 Employment Report that shows the unemployment rate fell to 3.7 percent in September, which is the lowest level since December 1969. This rate remained steady through the end of 2018. However, BLS also reported that labor force participation, which includes the percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population aged 16 and

older that is working or actively looking for work, has remained at a steady rate of 62.7 percent. The United States economy also recently added 134,000 jobs. The report noted job gains in various fields, including health care, professional and business services, and transportation and warehousing.

Apprenticeship

The fourth annual National Apprenticeship Week was held November 12-18, 2018. Throughout the week, employers were encouraged to discover how registered apprenticeship programs—funded through the Department of Labor—provide training opportunities for businesses and industry associations to meet the ongoing need for a skilled workforce. Currently, there are 447 registered apprenticeship programs offered in Texas, with more than 585,000 participating nationwide.

In other apprenticeship news, President Trump issued an executive order to better align government training programs with the demands of industries struggling to fill jobs due to a shortage of skilled workers. The Council for the American Worker, which is led by the secretaries of commerce and labor, was created by the order and will consolidate existing federal programs and assist in funding new job training initiatives, with a focus on apprenticeship programs.

Appropriations

On September 29, 2018, President Trump signed HR 6157, the appropriations bill that includes labor, health and human services, and education. This bill authorizes funding through September 30, 2019. The budget items show an increase from the proposed initial budget for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) adult and youth. However, WIOA dislocated worker, registered apprenticeship, and Wagner-Peyser employment services showed a significant decrease from the initial budget submitted in spring 2018. The budget provides funding for career and technical education programs along with adult education and family literacy but does not provide a breakdown of the budget for the respective programs.

Training

- WIOA Adult: \$845.5 million
This program assists disadvantaged, low-skilled, unemployed, and underemployed adults to gain the skills and credentials needed to compete in the workforce.
- WIOA Youth: \$903.4 million
This program prepares youth for jobs or postsecondary education through career guidance, educational attainment, and training assistance.
- WIOA Dislocated Worker: \$1.04 billion
This program prepares and provides training for dislocated workers for new jobs and careers.
- Registered Apprenticeship: \$160 million
This training program allows participants to gain academic knowledge and on-the-job skills while earning a paycheck.
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service: \$641.6 million
This program provides comprehensive recruiting, job search, and related services to business and job seekers to connect employers seeking workers and individuals seeking employment.

Veterans

- **Jobs for Veterans: \$180 million**
This state grant program supports disabled veterans' outreach programs to provide services to transitioning members of the armed forces.

Education

- **Career and Technical Education, and Adult Education and Family Literacy: \$1.9 billion**
Secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs prepare youth and adults for success in the workforce. This program includes basic education, literacy, and English language programs for adults.

Other Workforce-Related Legislation

The following bills were recently introduced within the fourth quarter and monitored throughout the 115th Congress. Bill summaries may include information from GovTrack and the Library of Congress.

HR 4323 – Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act. This bill will help promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research. The bill will modify several existing veteran scholarships and fellowships.

HR 5509 – Innovations in Mentoring, Training, and Apprenticeships Act. This bill would direct the National Science Foundation to provide grants for research about STEM education approaches and the STEM-related workforce, and for other purposes. The bill would amend Section 3 of the Scientific and Advanced-Technology Act of 1992 to allow grants to be awarded for associate degree programs in STEM fields for an in-demand workforce.

HR 5968 – Online Job Training Act of 2018. This bill would authorize a National On-line workforce training grant program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Eligible entities for the awards include schools, community-based organizations, and local governments.

HR 6099 – Apprenticeship Hubs Across America Act of 2018. This bill would establish a grant program intended to promote registered apprenticeships within in-demand industry sectors to support workforce intermediaries that work with local workforce development agencies, schools, and colleges. The grant funding may be used for purposes that include marketing registered apprenticeship, apprentice recruitment, assisting employers in adopting training models, training costs, and support services for apprentices.

HR 6515 – Occupational Licensing Board Antitrust Damages Relief and Reform Act of 2018. This bill would limit private antitrust damages against occupational licensing boards to promote beneficial reforms of state occupational licensing, among other purposes.

HR 6791 – Cyber Ready Workforce Act. This bill would establish a grant program within the Department of Labor to support the creation, implementation, and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs in cybersecurity.

HR 6820 – Pre-Apprenticeships To Hardhats (PATH) Act. This bill would direct the secretary of labor to support the development of pre-apprenticeship programs in the building and construction trades

that serve underrepresented populations, including individuals from low income and rural census tracts.

HR 6833 – Grants for Renewable Energy Education for the Nation (GREEN) Act. This bill would provide support to develop career and technical education programs of study and facilities in the areas of renewable energy.

HR 6935 – Access to Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (PELL) Act. This bill would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for job training Federal Pell Grants and to increase support for working students.

HR 6995 – Compete for the Future Act of 2018. This bill would direct the secretary of education to establish a prize competition on programs to prepare high school students for careers in in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

HR 7009 – An Act Targeting Resources to Communities in Need. This bill would provide an increased allocation of funding under certain programs for assistance in persistent poverty counties, and for any training or employment services program administered by the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor.

HR 7048 – Empowering Individuals to Succeed Through Education and Workforce Training Act. This bill would amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to establish a fund to provide support services for individuals participating in certain training activities under the act.

HR 7069 – Workforce Reentry Act. This bill would amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to make permanent a grant program to promote and assist in the reentry of ex-offenders into the workforce.

HR 7072 – Reserve Component Employer Incentive, Compensation, and Relief Act of 2018. This bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow for a reservist employment tax credit for each reservist employed by such employer authorized under Section 38 of the code.

HR 7092 – Minority Women in STEM Inclusion Act. This bill would direct the administrators of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation to produce a report to Congress regarding the efforts to support minority women involvement in STEM fields.

HR 7112 – Protections and Regulations for Our (PRO) Students Act. This bill would improve the Higher Education Act of 1965, among other purposes. The bill includes updated protections for students in regards to civil penalties, sanctions, and other remedies related to complaints towards an institution of higher education's misrepresentation of educational programs, space availability in a program for which a student might consider enrollment, admission requirements, and transferability of credits. This bill would also require program integrity efforts and program reviews.

HR 7204 – Developing Innovative Partnerships and Learning Opportunities that Motivate Achievement (DIPLOMA) Act. This bill would strengthen student achievement and graduation rates and prepare young people for college, careers, and citizenship through innovative partnerships that meet the comprehensive needs of children and youth.

HR 7214 – Cybersecurity Education Integration Act. This bill would direct the secretary of education to establish a pilot program to award competitive grants for the integration of cybersecurity education, among other purposes. The integration of cybersecurity education would prepare individuals to meet workforce needs in critical infrastructure sectors.

HR 7238 – Veterans and Servicemembers Employment Rights and Housing Act of 2018. This bill would prohibit discrimination on the basis of military service, among other purposes. The bill would prohibit certain employment practices for an employer, including: failing to or refusing to hire, discharging, or discriminating against any individual because of their military service; or limiting, segregating, or classifying employees or applicants in any way that would deprive them of employment opportunities based on their military service.

HR 7282 – Preservation Research at Institutions Serving Minorities (PRISM) Act. This bill would make Hispanic-serving institutions eligible for technical and financial assistance for the establishment of preservation training and degree programs.

HR 7376 – The Earning Experience Act of 2018. This bill would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish a work-based learning opportunities pilot grant program. The bill would require the secretary of education to establish a program to provide grants to eligible institutions participating under Section 449 of the act to establish or expand a program to develop work-based learning positions.

S 3557 – Invest in America Act. This bill would strengthen and improve local and regional workforce and economic competitiveness and resilience, among other purposes. The bill would help local and regional leaders build and support the necessary environment and conditions for employers to create and expand middle and high-skill jobs, train workers to have the knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of those jobs, support job creation, remove barriers to growth, and provide a range of workforce development activities.

S 3561 – National Guard and Reserve Entrepreneurship Support Act. This bill would support entrepreneurs serving in the National Guard and Reserve, among other purposes. The bill would expand the Small Business Administration Outreach Programs to include spouses of veterans and members of a reserve component of the armed forces. This bill would also establish a grant program to provide training, counseling, and other assistance to support members.

S 3563 – Hire Student Veterans Act. This bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code to: (1) allow a work opportunity tax credit for hiring a veteran attending an institute of higher learning using educational assistance provided under certain programs and (2) modify the minimum employment period required for veterans that qualify for the credit under this bill.

S 3589 – Inspiring New STEM Professionals by Investing in Renovation of Education Spaces (INSPIRES) Act. This bill would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 by establishing a program to support the modernization, renovation, or repair of career and technical education facilities. The program would also enable schools serving grades six through 12 that are located in rural areas or that serve Native American students to remodel or build new facilities to provide STEM classrooms and laboratories and support high-speed internet, among other purposes.

S 3596 – Innovation Zone Act. This bill would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to create an innovation zone initiative, among other purposes. The bill would establish an initiative consisting of voluntary experiments where the secretary and institutions of higher education are permitted to test the effectiveness of statutory and regulatory flexibility aimed at increasing student success in one or more of the following: reduction in student loan debt; increase in student retention; increase in employment upon graduation; and decrease in time to complete programs.

S 3601 – Delivering Outcomes for American Workers Act. This bill would amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to provide for a program that employs pay-for-performance financing for workforce development projects.

S 3606 – Disabled Veterans Rebuilding Infrastructure to Vitalize our Economy Act. This bill would amend the FAST Act to improve contracting opportunities for service-connected disabled veteran-owned small business concerns, and for others purposes.

S 3769 – Early Pell Promise Act. This bill would establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Program. The bill would allow students, as early as eighth grade, to receive commitment from the secretary on their eligibility to receive Federal Pell Grants during their first two academic years as an undergraduate student at an institution of higher education.

S 3783 – Community College Student Success Act. This bill would direct the secretary of education to establish and carry out a grant program to make grants to eligible institutions to plan and implement programs that provide comprehensive support services and resources designed to increase transfer and graduation rates at community colleges, among other purposes.

S 3802 – Effective Apprenticeships to Rebuild National Skills (EARNs) Act. This bill would promote effective registered apprenticeships for skills, credentials, and employment, and for other purposes. The bill would establish The Office of Apprenticeship under the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor. Under this bill, the new office would: ensure each registration agency maintains the standards necessary to be an apprenticeship program; recognize state entities as state apprenticeship agencies; manage the national apprenticeship system; promote awareness about apprenticeship; carry out all activities for pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs; regularly engage in program updates; participate in National Advisory Committees on Apprenticeship; and promote diversity within the programs.