



Federal Legislative Update

Quarter 3, September 2017



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.

Recent Highlights from Congress

Appropriations

The legislative branch is responsible for passing legislation to fund the government. From funding national defense to investing in job training and maintaining government operations, Congress decides how to appropriate taxpayer dollars each fiscal year. If Congress fails to pass legislation to fund the government before a new fiscal year begins, it can pass legislation to keep federal operations going at the current spending levels. This type of legislation is called a continuing resolution.

The president submitted a budget request on May 23, 2017, to Congress that proposed substantial cuts to workforce training, including 40 percent reductions in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs.

On September 8, 2017, the president signed the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2018 to fund the government with fiscal year (FY) 2018 appropriations through December 8, 2017. The House passed the bill with a vote of 316-90 followed by an 80-17 vote in the Senate. This action avoids the threat of a federal government shutdown on October 1, 2017. However, Congress still has to negotiate and pass a budget for the president's consideration.

Career and Technical Education

A bipartisan bill was introduced in the Senate that would make available to all middle school students the opportunity to explore careers and engage in career and technical education programs. The Middle STEP Act would support the development of a pilot program for middle school career exploration programs linked to career and technical education programs of study. If passed, this bill would award grants to eligible partnerships that develop these middle school career and technical education exploration programs. The program will include work-based learning methods or apprenticeships, career exploration, and career and labor market information. This type of opportunity is typically not available to students until high school or higher education.

Other Workforce-Related Legislation

The following bills were recently introduced and will continue to be monitored throughout the 115th Congress. Bill summaries may include information from GovTrack and the Library of Congress.

HR 2867 – The Job Opportunities Between Our Shores Act. This bill would amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to authorize a pilot grant program for community colleges, their systems, and local workforce boards to offer advanced manufacturing training programs.

HR 2933 – The Leveraging Effective Apprenticeships to Rebuild National Skills Act. This bill would expand apprenticeship training by authorizing a grant program to fund pre-apprenticeships and would require outreach and promotion of apprenticeship to local workforce agencies. The bill would authorize up to \$75 million annually and also authorize \$5 million for grants to support collaboration between colleges and apprenticeship programs.

HR 3094 – On-The-Job Training Act. This bill allows for grants to be awarded on a discretionary basis to eligible entities for adult on-the-job training or dislocated worker on-the-job training. Eligible entities include states, units of local government and local boards, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, business trade associations, and local educational agencies.

HR 3137 – Promoting Women in STEM Act. This bill would require schools receiving funding under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to work to increase the participation of women in science, technology, engineering and math fields.

HR 3336 – The Employ Young Americans Now Act. This bill would authorize and appropriate \$4 billion in fiscal year 2018 to provide summer and year-round employment opportunities for low-income youth. The bill would authorize another \$1.5 billion for competitive grants to provide work-based training and other work-related and educational strategies and activities. Grants would focus on those activities that demonstrate effectiveness in providing the skills and assistance needed to obtain employment by unemployed, low-income adults and low-income youth.

HR 3376 – The Jobs Now Act. This bill would amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to create a pilot program to award grants to units of general local government and community-based organizations to create jobs, among other purposes.

HR 3774 – The Reverse Transfer Efficiency Act. This bill would amend the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act to give community colleges access to the transcripts of students who once attended but transferred to other schools. This would allow the community colleges to award associate's degrees to transfer students when they have accumulated necessary credits elsewhere.

SB 1352 – The Apprenticeship and Jobs Training Act. This bill would allow for a tax credit of \$5,000 for up to three years for employers of federally registered apprentices.

SB 1518 – The Championing Apprenticeships for New Careers and Employees in Technology Act. This bill would authorize a grants program to support the work of industry intermediaries to develop apprenticeships in the technology sector.

SB 1599 – The Building U.S. Infrastructure by Leveraging Demands for Skills (BUILDS) Act. This bill is intended to promote industry or sector partnerships that engage in collaborative planning, resource alignment, and training efforts for a range of workers employed or potentially employed by infrastructure industries. This bill will also help to encourage industry growth and competitiveness and to improve worker training, retention, and advancement.

SB 1841 – The National Apprenticeship Act. This bill would amend the National Apprenticeship Act to require state agencies registering apprenticeships on behalf of the federal Office of Apprenticeship to make a determination on program applications within 90 days. If the agency does not approve or reject a program in that timeframe, the application would go to the federal office, which would have 30 days to make a decision.