H. R. 2368

To direct the Secretary of Labor to make grants to States, units of general local government, and Indian tribes for the purpose of creating employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed residents in distressed communities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 24, 2011

Mr. Ellison (for himself, Ms. Woolsey, Ms. Lee of California, Ms. Moore, Mr. Davis of Illinois, Mr. Carson of Indiana, and Mr. Jackson of Illinois) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Labor to make grants to States, units of general local government, and Indian tribes for the purpose of creating employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed residents in distressed communities.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Put America to Work

5 Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO STATES, UNITS OF GENERAL LOCAL
GOVERNMENT, AND INDIAN TRIBES.

(a) Establishment.—Subject to the availability of
appropriations for such purpose, the Secretary of Labor
shall make grants to States, units of general local govern-
ment, and Indian tribes to carry out activities in accord-
ance with this Act.

(b) Purpose.—The purpose of this program is to
create employment opportunities for unemployed and un-
deremployed residents of distressed communities in activi-
ties designed to address community needs and reduce dis-
parities in health, housing, education, job readiness, and
public infrastructure that have impeded these communities
from realizing their full economic potential.

(c) Eligibility.—For purposes of the grant pro-
gram under this Act, an eligible entity is—

(1) a unit of general local government, includ-
ing a metropolitan city or an urban county;

(2) a State; or

(3) an Indian tribe.

(d) Use of Funds.—A recipient of a grant under
this section shall use the grant for the following purposes:

(1) For the 9-month period after the date of
the enactment of this Act, the grant shall be used
only to fund the following types of fast-track job
placements:
(A) The painting and repair of schools, community centers, and libraries.

(B) The restoration and revitalization of abandoned and vacant properties to alleviate blight in distressed, foreclosure-affected, and natural disaster-affected areas of a unit of general local government.

(C) The expansion of emergency food programs to reduce hunger and promote family stability.

(D) The augmentation of staffing in Head Start, child care, and other early childhood education programs to promote school readiness and early literacy.

(E) The renovation and enhancement of maintenance of parks, playgrounds, and other public spaces.

(2) During the 9-month period after the date of the enactment of this Act, the grant recipients shall consult with community leaders, including local government officials, small business owners, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, and local residents to—

(A) assess the needs of the community served by the grant recipient;
(B) determine sectors of the local economy that are in need of employees;

(C) make recommendations for new employment opportunities in the areas described in paragraph (3); and

(D) assess the effectiveness of job placements made under paragraph (1).

(3) Not later than 9 months after the recipient of a grant begins to use the grant to fund fast-track job placements under paragraph (1), the recipient shall use the remaining amount of the grant to make grants to public entities, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, or small businesses to create opportunities for employment in the following areas:

(A) Construction, re-construction, rehabilitation, and site improvements of residences or public facilities, including improvements in the energy efficiency or environmental quality of such public facilities or residences.

(B) Provision of human services, including child care services, health care services, education, or recreational programs.
(C) The remediation and demolition of vacant and abandoned properties to eliminate blight.

(D) Programs that provide disadvantaged youth with opportunities for employment, education, leadership development, entrepreneurial skills development, and training.

(e) CONDITIONS.—As a condition of receiving a grant under this section, a grant recipient shall—

(1) agree to comply with the nondiscrimination policy set forth under section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5309);

(2) allocate not less than 85 percent of the funding allocated to each project funded under the grant to wages, benefits, and support services, including child care services, for individuals employed on such project;

(3) ensure that employment on any project funded under the grant is carried out in accordance with subsection (f); and

(4) institute an outreach program with community organizations and service providers in low-income communities to provide information about
placements funded under the grant to individuals
suited to perform community infrastructure work.

(f) EMPLOYMENT DESCRIBED.—Employment funded
under this section shall meet the following specifications:

(1) Any employer that employs an individual
whose employment is funded under the grant shall—

(A) employ such individual for not less
than 12 months;

(B) employ such individual for not less
than 30 hours per week;

(C) comply with responsible contractor
standards, as determined by the relevant official
in the unit of local general government;

(D) provide compensation to such indi-
vidual equal to that which is paid to employees
who have been employed to perform similar
work prior to the date such individual was
hired; and

(E) if such employment is in construction,
provide compensation to any laborer or me-
chanic employed under the grant at rates not
less than those prevailing on similar construc-
tion in the locality as determined by the Sec-
retary of Labor in accordance with subchapter
IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code.

(2) No individual whose employment is funded under the grant may work for an employer at which a collective bargaining agreement is in effect covering the same or similar work, unless—

(A) the consent of the union at such employer is obtained; and

(B) negotiations have taken place between such union and the employer as to the terms and conditions of such employment.

(3) An individual whose employment is funded under this Act may not displace other employees whose employment is not funded under this Act. A grant recipient under this Act may not hire an employee or employees with funds under this Act for any employment which the grant recipient would otherwise hire an employee who has been furloughed.

(4) An individual whose employment is funded under this Act shall be unemployed for not less than 30 days prior to beginning employment funded by a grant, as verified by the State or local department of labor, department of welfare, or similar office charged with maintaining records of unemployment.
(5) Not less than 35 percent of whose employment is funded under this Act shall be members of a targeted group (as described in section 51(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) as verified by the State or local department of labor, department of welfare, or similar office charged with maintaining records of unemployment.

(g) AWARD OF GRANTS.—

(1) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In selecting a project to receive funding for employing individuals in employment funded under this Act, a grant recipient shall consider—

(A) the input of all participants in a proposed project, including labor organizations, community organizations, and employers;

(B) the needs of the community intended to benefit from such project;

(C) the long-term goals and short term objectives to address such needs; and

(D) any recommendations for programs and activities developed to meet such needs.

(2) PRIORITY GIVEN TO CERTAIN PROJECTS.—A grant recipient under this section shall give priority to projects that—
(A) serve areas with the greatest level of economic need, determined for each such area by—

(i) the unemployment rate;

(ii) the rate of poverty;

(iii) the number of census tracts with concentrated poverty;

(iv) the lowest median income;

(v) the percentage of vacant and abandoned properties;

(vi) the percentage of home foreclosures; and

(vii) the indicators of poor resident health, including high rates of chronic disease, infant mortality, and life expectancy;

(B) integrate education and job skills training, including basic skills instruction and secondary education services;

(C) coordinate to the maximum extent feasible with pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs; and

(D) provide jobs in sectors where job growth is most likely, as determined by the Secretary, and in which career advancement opportunities exist to maximize long-term, sustain-
able employment for individuals after employ-
ment funded under this Act ends.

(h) ALLOCATION OF GRANTS.—

(1) GRANTS FOR INDIAN TRIBES AND DEPOSITS
into discretionary fund.—Not more than 5 per-
cent of the funds appropriated to carry out this Act
for any fiscal year shall be reserved for grants to In-
dian tribes and for deposit into a discretionary fund
established by the Secretary for national demonstra-
tion projects and multi-jurisdictional projects.

(2) GRANTS TO STATES.—Not more than 30
percent of funds appropriated to carry out this Act
for any fiscal year shall be allocated to States to dis-
tribute to units of general local government that do
not qualify for funds under paragraph (3).

(3) GRANTS TO UNITS OF GENERAL LOCAL
government.—Grant funds that are not reserved
under paragraphs (1) and (2) shall be allocated to
metropolitan cities and urban counties using the for-
mula under section 106(b) of the Housing and Com-
munity Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C.
5306(b)).

(i) RULEMAKING.—The Secretary of Labor may issue
regulations as the Secretary determines necessary and ap-
propriate to carry out the grant program authorized by this Act.

(j) Reports.—

(1) Reports by grant recipients.—Not later than 90 days after the last day of each fiscal year in which assistance under this section is furnished, a recipient of a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary a report containing the following:

(A) A description of the progress made in accomplishing the objectives of this chapter.

(B) A summary of the use of the grant during the preceding fiscal year.

(C) For units of general local government, a listing of each entity receiving funds and the amount of such grants, as well as a brief summary of the projects funded for each such unit, the extent of financial participation by other public or private entities, and the impact on employment and economic activity of such projects during the previous fiscal year.

(D) For States, a listing of each unit of general local government receiving funds and the amount of such grants, as well as a brief summary of the projects funded for each such
unit, the extent of financial participation by other public or private entities, and the impact on employment and economic activity of such projects during the previous fiscal year.

(E) The amount of money received and expended during the fiscal year.

(F) The number of individuals assisted under the grant whose household income is low-income, very low-income, or extremely low-income (as such terms are used for purposes of the Housing Act of 1937 and the regulations thereunder (42 U.S.C. 1437 et seq.)).

(G) The amount expended on administrative costs during the fiscal year.

(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—At least once every 6 months, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the use of grants awarded under this section and any progress in job creation.

(k) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “State” has the meaning given such term in section 5302(2) of title 42, United States Code.

(2) The term “unit of general local government” has the meaning given such term in section 5302(1) of title 42, United States Code.
(3) The term “Indian tribe” has the meaning given such term in section 5302(17) of title 42, United States Code.

(4) The term “small business” has the meaning given the term “small business concern” under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

(5) The term “metropolitan city” has the meaning given such term in section 5302(4) of title 42, United States Code.

(6) The term “urban county” has the meaning given such term in section 5302(6) of title 42, United States Code.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated $200,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2012 and $150,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2013 to carry out this Act. Amounts appropriated pursuant to this section shall remain available until expended.