S. 1517

To provide for the creation of jobs.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

September 7, 2011

Mr. Lautenberg (for himself, Mr. Harkin, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Blumenthal, and Mr. Reed) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To provide for the creation of jobs.

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “21st Century WPA Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administra-
tion” means the Works Progress Administration es-
tablished under section 3.
(2) ELIGIBLE DEPARTMENTS.—The term “eligible Departments” means the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Energy, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Education, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

(3) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term “eligible individual” means an individual who has been unemployed for at least the 60-day period prior to—

(A) in the case of employment under a work project approved by the Administration under section 4, the commencement of such project;

(B) in the case of a fellowship under section 5, the commencement of such fellowship; and

(C) in the case of a grant under section 6, the hiring of such individual under the grant.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Labor.
SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION.

(a) Establishment.—There is established within the Department of Labor a Works Progress Administration to be headed by the Secretary.

(b) Purpose.—The purpose of the Administration is to—

(1) receive works project proposals submitted by Federal departments and agencies under section 4(a)(1); and

(2) select works projects proposals that meet the criteria under section 4(a)(2), as being eligible for assistance under this Act.

SEC. 4. WPA PROJECTS.

(a) Project Proposals.—

(1) Submission.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and subsequently at such times as the Administration shall request, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Interior, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to the Administration proposals
for works projects within the jurisdiction of each such Secretary or Administrator that satisfy the criteria described in paragraph (2).

(2) CRITERIA.—The criteria described in this paragraph are the following with respect to the work project involved:

(A) The project would produce a high number of employee hours per dollar of the total project cost.

(B) Individuals with the required skills necessary to carry out the project can be readily recruited and employed from among the eligible individuals described in section 2(3).

(C) The project would provide a continuing contribution to economic growth after the project is completed.

(D) The project could be staffed by employees with minimal delay.

(3) TYPES OF PROJECTS.—Works projects under this subsection may include—

(A) residential and commercial building weatherization projects;

(B) residential and commercial water use efficiency improvement projects;
(C) highway, bridge, and rail repair and maintenance projects;

(D) manufacturing projects;

(E) school, library, and firehouse construction projects;

(F) soil erosion and pesticide runoff prevention projects;

(G) trail maintenance projects; and

(H) other projects that are proposed by the eligible departments and determined appropriate by the Administration.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—Project proposals submitted to the Administration under subsection (a)(1) shall include—

(1) a description of the project and a full schedule of estimated costs;

(2) an estimate of the number of employment hours required to complete the project;

(3) a hiring timetable relating to the employment of various staffing levels under the project;

(4) an estimated project completion date; and

(5) such other information as the eligible department determines appropriate.

(c) SELECTION OF PROPOSALS.—The Administration shall approve those proposals submitted under subsection (a)(1) that meet the criteria under subsection (a)(2) and
provide funding for such project from amounts appropriated under section 8.

(d) Project Administration.—An eligible department that has submitted a works project proposal under subsection (a)(1) shall have primary responsibility for the administration and completion of the project.

(e) Contracting.—An eligible department shall be a party to any contract that governs a works project that is approved and funded in any manner under this Act.

SEC. 5. WPA FELLOWSHIPS.

(a) In General.—An eligible employer that is unable to hire an individual to fill an employment position that has been vacant for at least 90 days shall be eligible to enter into an agreement under this section with the Administration to provide training to a WPA fellow with respect to such position so that such fellow may become qualified to be employed by the employer to fill such position.

(b) Eligible Employer.—To be eligible to enter into an agreement under subsection (a), an employer shall submit an application to the Administration at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require, including—

(1) a description of the employment position for which the employer is seeking a WPA fellow; and
(2) a certification that the employer has been unable to fill such position during at least the 90-day period prior to the date of the application.

(c) Fellows.—An eligible individual may submit an application to the Administration to participate in the WPA fellowship program. Such application shall include such information as the Secretary shall require. The Administration shall maintain a list of eligible individuals who have submitted applications under this subsection, along with a description of the skills of each such individual.

(d) Terms of Fellowship.—

(1) Detailing to Employer.—An eligible individual who is selected to participate in the WPA fellowship program under this section shall be an employee of the Administration who is detailed by the Secretary to fill the employment position of an eligible employer under this section.

(2) Training Period.—A WPA fellow that is detailed to an employer under paragraph (1) shall be provided with training by such employer with respect to the employment position for a period of not to exceed 12 months, except that the employer may at any time during such 12-month period employ such fellow to fill such employment position. At the con-
clussion of such 12-month period, the employer shall employ such fellow or terminate the services of the fellow.

SEC. 6. PUBLIC SAFETY HIRING GRANTS.

The Secretary may transfer amounts appropriated under section 8—

(1) to the Attorney General for use under the grant program under section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd) for the hiring of eligible individuals; and


SEC. 7. REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and biannually thereafter (on June 30 and December 31 of each year), the Administration shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(1) the number of works project proposals submitted to the Administration under section 4;
(2) the number of works projects approved by the Administration during the reporting period;
(3) the number of works projects completed by the date of the report; and
(4) with respect to each approved work project, a project description that includes information about whether the project is complete and such other information as the Administration determines appropriate.

(b) AUDITS.—The Government Accountability Office shall conduct an annual audit of—
(1) the performance and activities of the Administration;
(2) the performance and completion of work projects; and
(3) the performance of the eligible departments with respect to such projects.

SEC. 8. APPROPRIATIONS.
Out of funds of the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there is appropriated to carry out this Act, $250,000,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2012 through 2013.

SEC. 9. SUNSET.
The authority of the Administration to provide assistance for works projects under this Act shall terminate
upon the date on which the Secretary certifies that the national unemployment rate is below 6 percent.

SEC. 10. SURCHARGE ON HIGH INCOME INDIVIDUALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new part:

“PART VIII—SURCHARGE ON HIGH INCOME INDIVIDUALS

“Sec. 59B. Surcharge on high income individuals.

“SEC. 59B. SURCHARGE ON HIGH INCOME INDIVIDUALS.

“(a) GENERAL RULE.—In the case of a taxpayer other than a corporation, there is hereby imposed (in addition to any other tax imposed by this subtitle) a tax equal to 5.4 percent of so much of the modified adjusted gross income of the taxpayer as exceeds $1,000,000 ($2,000,000 in the case of any taxpayer making a joint return under section 6013).

“(b) MODIFIED ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘modified adjusted gross income’ means adjusted gross income reduced by any deduction (not taken into account in determining adjusted gross income) allowed for investment interest (as defined in section 163(d)). In the case of an estate or trust, adjusted gross income shall be determined as provided in section 67(e).
“(c) Special Rules.—

“(1) Nonresident Alien.—In the case of a nonresident alien individual, only amounts taken into account in connection with the tax imposed under section 871(b) shall be taken into account under this section.

“(2) Citizens and Residents Living Abroad.—The dollar amount in effect under subsection (a) shall be decreased by the excess of—

“(A) the amounts excluded from the taxpayer’s gross income under section 911, over

“(B) the amounts of any deductions or exclusions disallowed under section 911(d)(6) with respect to the amounts described in subparagraph (A).

“(3) Charitable Trusts.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to a trust all the unexpired interests in which are devoted to one or more of the purposes described in section 170(c)(2)(B).

“(4) Not Treated as Tax Imposed by This Chapter for Certain Purposes.—The tax imposed under this section shall not be treated as tax imposed by this chapter for purposes of determining the amount of any credit under this chapter or for purposes of section 55.
“(d) DEFICIT REDUCTION.—Amounts collected under this section shall be used to reduce the Federal deficit.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of parts for subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“PART VIII. SURCHARGE ON HIGH INCOME INDIVIDUALS.”.

(e) SECTION 15 NOT TO APPLY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall not be treated as a change in a rate of tax for purposes of section 15 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2011.