

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4371

To ensure that qualified technical schools offering certain career pathway and job training programs have the same access to Federal grants as 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 22, 2026

Mr. CURTIS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

---

## A BILL

To ensure that qualified technical schools offering certain career pathway and job training programs have the same access to Federal grants as 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

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 “Transforming Edu-  
5       cation through College and Hands-On Training Act” or  
6       the “TECH Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MODIFICATION TO ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FED-**  
2 **ERAL GRANT PROGRAMS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provi-  
4 sion of law, a qualified technical school shall be eligible  
5 to participate in any covered Federal grant program to  
6 the same extent, and on the same basis, as any 2-year  
7 or 4-year institution of higher education.

8 (b) AGENCY ACTION.—Not later than 180 days after  
9 the date of enactment of this Act, each Secretary con-  
10 cerned shall—

11 (1) modify the eligibility criteria and application  
12 procedures for the covered Federal grant programs  
13 under the jurisdiction of such Secretary, as nec-  
14 essary, to ensure that qualified technical schools are  
15 eligible to participate in the program to the same ex-  
16 tent, and on the same basis, as 2-year and 4-year  
17 institutions of higher education, as required under  
18 subsection (a); and

19 (2) issue guidance that specifies how grants  
20 under such programs should be dispersed among  
21 qualified technical schools and 2-year and 4-year in-  
22 stitutions of higher education to ensure that the sec-  
23 tors and occupations described in subsection  
24 (c)(4)(A)(ii) have an adequate workforce pipeline to  
25 replace the aging and retiring current employees.

26 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1           (1) 2-YEAR OR 4-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER  
 2           EDUCATION.—The term “2-year or 4-year institution  
 3           of higher education” means an institution described  
 4           in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of  
 5           1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

6           (2) COVERED FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAM.—The  
 7           term “covered Federal grant program” means the  
 8           following:

9                   (A) Grants made by the Department of  
 10           Education under—

11                       (i) the Strengthening Institutions Pro-  
 12                       gram authorized under part A of title III  
 13                       of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20  
 14                       U.S.C. 1057 et seq.);

15                       (ii) the Federal TRIO Program au-  
 16                       thorized under chapter 1 of subpart 2 of  
 17                       part A of title IV of the Higher Education  
 18                       Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a–11 et seq.);  
 19                       and

20                       (iii) the Child Care Access Means  
 21                       Parents in School Program (commonly  
 22                       known as the “CCAMPIS Program”) au-  
 23                       thorized under section 419N of the Higher  
 24                       Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070e).

1 (B) Grants made by the Department of  
 2 Labor under the Strengthening Community  
 3 Colleges Training Grants Program, authorized  
 4 under section 169(c) of the Workforce Innova-  
 5 tion and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3224(c)).

6 (3) ELIGIBLE CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAM.—  
 7 The term “eligible career pathway program” means  
 8 a program that—

9 (A) meets the requirements of section  
 10 484(d)(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965  
 11 (20 U.S.C. 1091(d)(2));

12 (B) is offered by a provider on the list  
 13 under section 122(d) of the Workforce Innova-  
 14 tion and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3152(d));

15 (C) is part of a career pathway, as defined  
 16 in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and  
 17 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102); and

18 (D) is aligned to a program of study, as  
 19 defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Ca-  
 20 reer and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20  
 21 U.S.C. 2302).

22 (4) ELIGIBLE JOB TRAINING PROGRAM.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “eligible job  
 24 training program” means a career and technical  
 25 education program that—

1 (i) is a program of at least 150 clock  
2 hours of instruction, but less than 600  
3 clock hours of instruction, or an equivalent  
4 number of credit hours, offered by a post-  
5 secondary vocational institution (as defined  
6 in section 102(c) of the Higher Education  
7 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c))) located  
8 in the United States during a minimum of  
9 8 weeks, but less than 15 weeks;

10 (ii) provides training that is—

11 (I) in a sector or occupation de-  
12 termined by the Secretary concerned  
13 to be essential for national security,  
14 public safety, supply chain security,  
15 transportation, critical manufacturing  
16 or infrastructure, healthcare, or public  
17 health; and

18 (II) aligned with the require-  
19 ments of high-skill, high-wage occupa-  
20 tions or in-demand industry sectors or  
21 occupations in the State or local area,  
22 as determined by an industry or sec-  
23 tor partnership;

24 (iii) is a program of training services,  
25 and provided through an eligible training

provider that is on the list under section 122(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3152(d));

(iv) provides a student, upon completion of the program, with a recognized postsecondary credential that is recognized by employers in the relevant industry, including credentials recognized by industry or sector partnerships in the relevant industry in the State or local area where the industry is located and the job training program is provided;

(v) has been determined by the school (after validation of that determination by an industry or sector partnership) to provide academic content, an amount of instructional time, and a recognized postsecondary credential that are sufficient to—

(I) meet the hiring requirements of potential employers; and

(II) satisfy any applicable educational prerequisite requirement for professional licensure or certification, so that the student who completes the program and seeks employment quali-

1                   fies to take any licensure or certifi-  
2                   cation examination needed to practice  
3                   or find employment in an occupation  
4                   that the program prepares students to  
5                   enter;

6                   (vi) may include integrated education  
7                   and training;

8                   (vii) may be offered as part of an eli-  
9                   gible career pathway program; and

10                  (viii) does not exceed by more than 50  
11                  percent the minimum number of clock  
12                  hours required for training if the State has  
13                  established such a requirement.

14                  (B) APPROVAL BY THE SECRETARY.—In  
15                  the case of a program that is seeking to estab-  
16                  lish eligibility as an eligible job training pro-  
17                  gram under this paragraph, the Secretary of  
18                  Education shall make a determination about  
19                  whether the program meets the requirements of  
20                  this paragraph not more than 60 days after the  
21                  date on which such program is submitted for  
22                  consideration as an eligible job training pro-  
23                  gram.

24                  (C) ADDITIONAL ASSURANCE.—The Sec-  
25                  retary of Education shall not determine that a

1 program is an eligible job training program in  
 2 accordance with subparagraph (B) unless the  
 3 Secretary receives a certification from the ap-  
 4 propriate State board containing an assurance  
 5 that the program meets the requirements of  
 6 subparagraph (A).

7 (5) QUALIFIED TECHNICAL SCHOOL.—The term  
 8 “qualified technical school” means a postsecondary  
 9 vocational institution (as defined in section 102(c) of  
 10 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
 11 1002(c))) that—

12 (A) offers an eligible career pathway pro-  
 13 gram or an eligible job training program; and

14 (B) is located in the United States.

15 (6) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Sec-  
 16 retary concerned” means—

17 (A) the Secretary of Education, with re-  
 18 spect to a covered Federal grant program ad-  
 19 ministered by the Department of Education;  
 20 and

21 (B) the Secretary of Labor, with respect to  
 22 a covered Federal grant program administered  
 23 by the Department of Labor.

24 (7) WIOA TERMS.—The terms “industry or  
 25 sector partnership”, “in-demand industry sector or



1        occupation”, “recognized postsecondary credential”,  
2        and “State board” have the meanings given such  
3        terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and  
4        Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

○