

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 429

To expand the Manufacturing Extension Program to bring the new economy to small and medium-sized businesses.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 1, 2001

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. DAYTON, Mr. DODD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Mr. SCHUMER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To expand the Manufacturing Extension Program to bring the new economy to small and medium-sized businesses.

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 “Technology Extension
5 Act of 2001”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The Federal Government developed the Ag-
9 riculture Extension Program, and more recently, the

1 Manufacturing Extension Program to help farmers
 2 and small manufacturers gain access to the latest
 3 technologies. Today’s small and medium-sized busi-
 4 nesses need a technology extension program that
 5 provides access to cutting edge technology.

6 (2) There is a need to create partnerships to
 7 cut the time it takes for new developments in univer-
 8 sity laboratories to reach the manufacturing floor, to
 9 help small and medium-sized businesses transform
 10 their innovations into jobs.

11 (3) There is a need to build upon the Manufac-
 12 turing Extension Program to encourage the adoption
 13 of advanced technology.

14 **SEC. 3. TECHNOLOGY EXTENSION PROGRAM.**

15 (a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section—

16 (1) to encourage meaningful use of the most
 17 advanced available technologies by small businesses
 18 and medium-sized businesses to the maximum extent
 19 possible to improve the productivity of those busi-
 20 nesses and thereby to promote economic growth; and

21 (2) to promote regional partnerships between
 22 educational institutions and businesses to develop
 23 such technologies and products in the surrounding
 24 areas.

1 (b) GRANT PROGRAM.—To achieve the purpose of
2 this section, the Secretary of Commerce (in this section,
3 referred to as the “Secretary”) shall carry out a program
4 to provide, through grants, financial assistance for the es-
5 tablishment and support of regional centers for the com-
6 mercial use of advanced technologies by small businesses
7 and medium-sized businesses.

8 (c) ELIGIBILITY.—An entity is eligible to receive a
9 grant as a regional center under this section if the
10 entity—

11 (1) is affiliated with a United States-based in-
12 stitution or organization that is operated on a not-
13 for-profit basis, or any combination of two or more
14 of such institutions or organizations;

15 (2) offers to enter into an agreement with the
16 Secretary to function as a regional center for the
17 commercial use of advanced technologies for the pur-
18 pose of this section within a region determined ap-
19 propriate by the Secretary; and

20 (3) demonstrates that it has the capabilities
21 necessary to achieve the purpose of this section
22 through its operations as a center within that re-
23 gion.

24 (d) SELECTION OF APPLICANTS.—

1 (1) COMPETITIVE PROCESS.—The Secretary
 2 shall use a competitive process for the awarding of
 3 grants under this section and, under that process,
 4 select recipients of the grants on the basis of merit,
 5 with priority given to underserved areas.

6 (2) APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS.—The Sec-
 7 retary shall prescribe the form and content of appli-
 8 cations required for grants under this section.

9 (e) SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL CENTERS.—
 10 A regional center may use the proceeds of a grant under
 11 this section for any activity that carries out the purpose
 12 of this section, including such activities as the following:

13 (1) Assist small businesses and medium-sized
 14 businesses to address their most critical needs for
 15 the application of the latest technology, improvement
 16 of infrastructure, and use of best business practices.

17 (2) In conjunction with institutions of higher
 18 education and laboratories located in the region,
 19 transfer technologies to small businesses and me-
 20 dium-sized businesses located in such region to cre-
 21 ate jobs and increase production in surrounding
 22 areas.

23 (f) ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES.—

24 (1) COST-SHARING.—The Secretary may re-
 25 quire the recipient of a grant to defray, out of funds

1 available from sources other than the Federal Gov-
2 ernment, a specific level of the operating expenses of
3 the regional center for which the grant is made.

4 (2) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—

5 The Secretary, in awarding a grant, may impose any
6 other terms and conditions for the use of the pro-
7 ceeds of the grant that the Secretary determines ap-
8 propriate for carrying out the purposes of this sec-
9 tion and to protect the interests of the United
10 States.

11 (g) DEFINITIONS OF SMALL BUSINESS AND ME-
12 DIUM-SIZED BUSINESS.—

13 (1) SECRETARY TO PRESCRIBE.—The Secretary
14 shall prescribe the definitions of the terms “small
15 business” and “medium-sized business” for the pur-
16 pose of this section.

17 (2) SMALL BUSINESS STANDARDS.—In defining
18 the term “small business”, the Secretary shall apply
19 the standards applicable for the definition of the
20 term “small-business concern” under section 3 of
21 the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

22 (h) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe
23 regulations for the grant program administered under this
24 section.

1 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Com-
3 merce for carrying out this section \$125,000,000 for fiscal
4 year 2002, and such sums as are necessary for each fiscal
5 year thereafter.

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