

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5975

To amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide for the establishment of the Small Business Liaison Pilot Program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 20, 2012

Ms. BONAMICI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide for the establishment of the Small Business Liaison Pilot Program.

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 “Workforce Infrastruc-
5 ture for Skilled Employees Investment Act” or the “WISE
6 Investment Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. SMALL BUSINESS LIAISON PILOT PROGRAM.**

8 Section 171 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998
9 (29 U.S.C. 2916) is amended by adding at the end the
10 following:

1 “(f) SMALL BUSINESS LIAISON PILOT PROGRAM.—

2 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS LI-
3 AISON PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary may award
4 competitive grants to local boards, community col-
5 leges, and postsecondary vocational institutions in
6 States and outlying areas to promote local economic
7 growth and eliminate gaps between the workforce
8 skills available and the workforce skills needed in
9 local areas or regions.

10 “(2) APPLICATION.—To receive a grant under
11 this subsection a local board, community college, or
12 postsecondary vocational institution in a State or
13 outlying area shall submit to the Secretary an appli-
14 cation in such manner, at such time, and containing
15 such information as the Secretary may require.

16 “(3) SPECIFICATIONS OF GRANTS.—

17 “(A) TIME PERIOD.—A grant shall be used
18 over a 36-month period.

19 “(B) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—In determining
20 the amount of a grant made under this sub-
21 section, the Secretary may consider—

22 “(i) the ability of the grant applicant
23 to conduct outreach activities;

24 “(ii) the ability of the grant applicant
25 to conduct skills gap assessments;

1 “(iii) the extent to which the grant
2 applicant works with or, after imple-
3 menting a strategic skills gap action plan,
4 plans to work with small businesses within
5 its local area or region; and

6 “(iv) any other factor that the Sec-
7 retary deems appropriate.

8 “(C) LIMITATIONS.—

9 “(i) A recipient may not receive more
10 than one grant under this subsection.

11 “(ii) No grant under this subsection
12 may be for an amount more than
13 \$500,000.

14 “(iii) The Secretary shall, in deter-
15 mining whether to award a grant, consider
16 the geographic diversity of grant recipi-
17 ents.

18 “(D) USE OF FUNDS.—

19 “(i) IN GENERAL.—A local board,
20 community college, or postsecondary voca-
21 tional institution that receives a grant
22 under this subsection shall use the grant
23 funds to pay for a new or current employee
24 to serve as liaison to conduct activities de-
25 scribed in clause (ii).

1 “(ii) SMALL & LOCAL BUSINESS LIAI-
2 SON.—The liaison—

3 “(I) shall—

4 “(aa) prepare a strategic ac-
5 tion skills gap assessment;

6 “(bb) develop a strategic
7 skills gap action plan; and

8 “(cc) conduct any other ac-
9 tivity that the Secretary deems
10 appropriate for the purposes of
11 this subsection; and

12 “(II) may—

13 “(aa) engage in outreach in
14 the local area or region;

15 “(bb) conduct business site
16 visits, interviews, and assess-
17 ments;

18 “(cc) consult in the imple-
19 mentation of the skills action
20 plan;

21 “(dd) complete more than 1
22 skills gap action plan; and

23 “(ee) consult with the local
24 offices of the Small Business Ad-
25 ministration.

1 “(iii) PROHIBITION.—A grant received
2 under this subsection may not be used to
3 supplant existing funding or efforts.

4 “(E) CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMA-
5 TION.—The grant recipient may not disclose
6 the name, address, or contact information of a
7 business, employer, or other person that pro-
8 vided information to the grant recipient to com-
9 pile information in the strategic skills gap as-
10 sessment or strategic skills gap action plan
11 without consent of such business, employer, or
12 other person.

13 “(4) REPORTING.—Each year, the Secretary
14 shall report to the Congress—

15 “(A) the number of grants awarded under
16 this subsection;

17 “(B) the recipients of grants awarded
18 under this subsection;

19 “(C) the activities carried out by each re-
20 cipient under paragraph (3)(D); and

21 “(D) an assessment describing—

22 “(i) the success of the program to
23 promote local economic growth and elimi-
24 nate gaps between the workforce skills

1 available and the workforce skills needed in
2 local areas or regions; and

3 “(ii) any recommendations for reau-
4 thorization and expansion of the program
5 that the Secretary may have.

6 “(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

7 “(A) COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The term
8 ‘community college’ has the meaning given the
9 term in section 312(f) of the Higher Education
10 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058(f)).

11 “(B) LOCAL AREA.—The term ‘local area’
12 means the labor market immediately sur-
13 rounding or affected by a local board, commu-
14 nity college, or postsecondary vocational institu-
15 tion.

16 “(C) POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL INSTI-
17 TUTION.—The term ‘postsecondary vocational
18 institution’ has the meaning given the term in
19 section 102(c) of the Higher Education Act of
20 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c)).

21 “(D) REGION.—The term ‘region’ means 2
22 or more local areas that comprise a common
23 labor market for an industry sector of related
24 occupations.

1 “(E) STRATEGIC SKILLS GAP ASSESS-
2 MENT.—The term ‘strategic skills gap assess-
3 ment’ means an assessment that—

4 “(i) identifies areas of current and ex-
5 pected demand for labor and skills in a
6 specific industry sector of related occupa-
7 tions that is—

8 “(I) producing jobs in the local
9 area or region involved;

10 “(II) developing emerging jobs in
11 the local area or region involved; or

12 “(III) suffering chronic worker
13 shortages;

14 “(ii) identifies the current and ex-
15 pected supply of labor and skills in that
16 sector or group in the local area or region;

17 “(iii) identifies gaps between the cur-
18 rent and expected demand and supply of
19 labor and skills in that section or group in
20 the local area or region;

21 “(iv) contains the results of a survey
22 or focus group interviews of employers,
23 labor organizations, and other relevant in-
24 dividuals and organizations in the local
25 area or region; and

1 “(v) contains data regarding—

2 “(I) specific employment oppor-
3 tunities offered by industries in the
4 local area or region;

5 “(II) specific skills desired for
6 employment opportunities offered by
7 industries in the local area or region;

8 “(III) occupations and positions
9 in the local area or region that are
10 difficult to fill;

11 “(IV) specific skills desired for
12 occupations and positions in the local
13 area or region that are difficult to fill;

14 “(V) areas of growth and decline
15 among industries and occupations in
16 the local area or region;

17 “(VI) specific skills desired for
18 areas of growth among industries and
19 occupations in the local area or re-
20 gion; and

21 “(VII) specific inventories of
22 skills of unemployed or under-
23 employed individuals in the local area
24 or region.

1 “(F) STRATEGIC SKILLS GAP ACTION
2 PLAN.—The term ‘strategic skills gap action
3 plan’ means a plan based on the strategic skills
4 gap assessment that—

5 “(i) identifies—

6 “(I) specific barriers to adequate
7 supply of labor and skills in demand
8 in a specific industry sector of related
9 occupations that is producing jobs in
10 the local area or region; and

11 “(II) activities that will remove
12 or alleviate the barriers described in
13 subclause (I) that could be under-
14 taken by the local board, community
15 college, or postsecondary vocational
16 institution;

17 “(ii) specifies how the local board,
18 community college, or postsecondary voca-
19 tional institution may integrate the activi-
20 ties described in clause (i) within the local
21 area or region; and

22 “(iii) identifies resources and strate-
23 gies that may be used in the local area or
24 region to address the skills gaps for both

1 unemployed and employed workers in that
2 industry sector.

3 “(6) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

4 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
5 retary such sums as may be necessary to carry out
6 this subsection.”.

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