

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1619

To direct the Secretary of Labor to develop a strategy report to address the skills gap by providing recommendations to increase on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities, increase employer participation in education and workforce training, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 30, 2013

Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. HELLER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Labor to develop a strategy report to address the skills gap by providing recommendations to increase on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities, increase employer participation in education and workforce training, 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 “Skills Gap Strategy
5 Act of 2013”.

1 **SEC. 2. STRATEGY REPORT.**

2 (a) STRATEGY REPORT REQUIRED.—The Secretary
3 shall develop and submit to Congress a strategy report to
4 address the skills gap by providing analysis and rec-
5 ommendations to increase on-the-job training and appren-
6 ticeship opportunities and increase employer participation
7 in education and workforce training.

8 (b) GOALS OF THE STRATEGY REPORT.—The strat-
9 egy report required by subsection (a) shall include specific
10 recommendations to achieve the following goals:

11 (1) To increase the aggregate number of em-
12 ployers and employees participating in on-the-job
13 training and apprenticeships.

14 (2) To determine ways in which the Depart-
15 ment of Labor can increase employer outreach to en-
16 courage new and expanded employer participation in
17 education and workforce training.

18 (3) To identify and prioritize industry-recog-
19 nized postsecondary credentials that are nationally
20 portable and aligned with in-demand occupations in
21 industries such as construction, manufacturing, and
22 others that are emerging.

23 (4) To determine ways in which the Depart-
24 ment of Labor can better address the skills gap by
25 maximizing existing resources, programs, and per-
26 sonnel.

1 (c) ANALYSIS REQUIRED.—As part of the strategy
2 report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall, at a min-
3 imum, include the following:

4 (1) A comparison of United States on-the-job
5 training and apprenticeship policies and strategies
6 with the policies and strategies of other countries
7 where employers play a larger role in education and
8 workforce training.

9 (2) An assessment of the Department of La-
10 bor's Registered Apprenticeship program to deter-
11 mine how it can be better utilized to appeal to more
12 industries and to boost the goals described in sub-
13 section (b).

14 (3) An evaluation of any existing or potential
15 opportunities within the Department of Labor to
16 refocus or repurpose resources and personnel to bet-
17 ter support on-the-job training and apprenticeship
18 goals.

19 (4) An analysis of the specific barriers pre-
20 venting the domestic workforce from acquiring the
21 skills desired by domestic employers, including an
22 assessment of opportunities to reduce those barriers
23 by—

1 (A) improving coordination between Fed-
2 eral agencies that administer employment and
3 training programs; and

4 (B) modifying Federal employment and
5 training programs to enable States to better
6 utilize Federal employment and training funds.

7 (d) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Secretary shall in-
8 clude in the skills gap strategy report required under sub-
9 section (a) recommendations for achieving the goals in-
10 cluded in the strategy pursuant to subsection (b). Such
11 recommendations may include proposals as follows:

12 (1) Actions that may be taken by the Federal
13 Government, Congress, State, local and territorial
14 governments, the private sector, universities, indus-
15 try associations, and other stakeholders to improve
16 policies, coordination, and interaction between such
17 entities, including strategies and best practices to—

18 (A) boost public-private partnerships and
19 employer-led partnerships; and

20 (B) help establish regional industry part-
21 nerships.

22 (2) Adoption of strategies that have been imple-
23 mented and proven successful in key industries and
24 regions in the United States and in other countries.

1 (3) In coordination with the Secretary of Com-
2 merce and the Secretary of Education, develop plans
3 that identify strategies—

4 (A) for increased employer participation in
5 career and technical education;

6 (B) to better align career and technical
7 education curriculums and programs with fast
8 growing industry sectors;

9 (C) to encourage more pre-apprenticeship
10 and college credit courses in secondary schools;

11 (D) to improve school-to-work transitions
12 and connections; and

13 (E) to assist employers in partnering with
14 K–12 schools, community colleges, and service
15 providers.

16 (e) SUBMITTAL OF STRATEGY REPORT.—Not later
17 than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act,
18 the Secretary shall submit to Congress the strategy report
19 developed under this section.

20 (f) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary may imple-
21 ment the recommendations under subsection (d) as the
22 Secretary determines appropriate, if otherwise permitted
23 under law.

24 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

25 In this Act:

1 (1) INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED.—The term “indus-
2 try-recognized”, as used with respect to a credential,
3 means a credential that—

4 (A) is sought or accepted by employers
5 within the industry sector involved as recog-
6 nized, preferred, or required for recruitment,
7 screening, hiring, or advancement;

8 (B) is endorsed by a recognized trade or
9 professional association or organization, rep-
10 resenting a significant part of the industry sec-
11 tor; and

12 (C) is a nationally portable credential that
13 is sought or accepted across multiple States, as
14 described in subparagraph (A).

15 (2) RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDEN-
16 TIAL.—The term “recognized postsecondary creden-
17 tial” means a credential consisting of an industry-
18 recognized credential for postsecondary training, a
19 certificate that meets the requirements of subpara-
20 graphs (A) and (C) of paragraph (1) for postsec-
21 ondary training, a certificate of completion of a post-
22 secondary apprenticeship through a program de-
23 scribed in section 122(a)(2)(B) of the Workforce In-
24 vestment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2842(a)(2)(B)), or
25 an associate degree or baccalaureate degree awarded

1 by an institution of higher education (as defined in
2 section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
3 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a))).

4 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
5 the Secretary of Labor.

6 (4) SKILLS GAP.—The term “skills gap” refers
7 to the difference, or gap, between the current supply
8 of labor and skills of the workforce and that which
9 is desired by employers.

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