

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2620

To bolster the domestic workforce by encouraging communication between career and technical education institutions and emphasizing potential employment opportunities, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain costs relating to career and technical education as qualified higher education expenses for purposes of section 529 programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 17, 2019

Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To bolster the domestic workforce by encouraging communication between career and technical education institutions and emphasizing potential employment opportunities, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain costs relating to career and technical education as qualified higher education expenses for purposes of section 529 programs, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Generating Real Op-
3 portunities for Workforce Training and Hiring Act” or the
4 “GROWTH Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF THE SENATE ON CAREER AND TECH-**
6 **NICAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS.**

7 It is the sense of the Senate that—

8 (1) consistent communication between institu-
9 tions providing career and technical education, as
10 defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career
11 and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C.
12 2302), and employment entities regarding cur-
13 riculum and industry need is paramount to pro-
14 ducing a truly skilled and viable domestic workforce;

15 (2) employment opportunities provided through
16 recognized postsecondary credentials, as defined in
17 section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Oppor-
18 tunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102), are as important to the
19 advancement of the economy of the United States as
20 any other domestic business sector; and

21 (3) elementary schools and secondary schools
22 (as such terms are defined in section 8101 of the El-
23 elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
24 U.S.C. 7801)) should highlight enrollment in career
25 and technical professions as desirable and often
26 high-skill, high-wage occupations.

1 **SEC. 3. INCLUSION OF TRANSPORTATION AND STUDENT**
 2 **LOAN EXPENSES OF CAREER AND TECH-**
 3 **NICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 529(e)
 5 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by add-
 6 ing at the end the following new subparagraph:

7 “(C) CERTAIN COSTS OF CAREER AND
 8 TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.—

9 “(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an
 10 individual who is enrolled in (or, for pur-
 11 poses of subclause (II), who is enrolled in
 12 or has graduated from) career and tech-
 13 nical education, such term shall also in-
 14 clude—

15 “(I) costs for transportation in
 16 the course of attendance of such pro-
 17 gram, and

18 “(II) amounts paid by the indi-
 19 vidual in repayment of a student loan
 20 incurred to finance the individual’s
 21 enrollment in such program.

22 “(ii) CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDU-
 23 CATION.—For purposes of this subpara-
 24 graph, the term ‘career and technical edu-
 25 cation’ means a program of organized edu-

1 cational activities which offers a sequence
2 of courses which—

3 “(I) provides individuals with co-
4 herent and rigorous content aligned
5 with challenging academic standards
6 and relevant technical knowledge and
7 skills needed to prepare for further
8 education and careers in current or
9 emerging professions,

10 “(II) provides technical skill pro-
11 ficiency, an industry-recognized cre-
12 dential, a certificate, or an associate
13 degree, and

14 “(III) includes competency-based
15 applied learning which contributes to
16 the academic knowledge, higher-order
17 reasoning and problem-solving skills,
18 work attitudes, general employability
19 skills, technical skills, occupation-spe-
20 cific skills, and knowledge of all as-
21 pects of an industry, including entre-
22 preneurship, of an individual.

23 Such program may include prerequisite
24 courses (other than a remedial course)

1 which meet the requirements of this
2 clause.”.

3 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
4 this section shall apply to distributions made after the
5 date of the enactment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 4. HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE DEVELOP-**
7 **MENT INITIATIVES.**

8 Section 504 of title 23, United States Code, is
9 amended by adding at the end the following:

10 “(i) HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE DEVEL-
11 OPMENT INITIATIVES.—

12 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall
13 provide grants under this subsection to eligible enti-
14 ties described in paragraph (3) to establish highway
15 construction workforce development initiatives (re-
16 ferred to in this subsection as the ‘initiatives’) to at-
17 tract, train, and place workers into highway con-
18 struction careers.

19 “(2) COOPERATIVE EFFORTS.—The initiatives
20 established with a grant under this subsection shall
21 encourage cooperative efforts between—

22 “(A) the highway construction industry;

23 “(B) the Federal Highway Administration;

24 “(C) State departments of transportation;

1 “(D) State and local workforce develop-
2 ment boards;

3 “(E) community colleges and technical
4 schools; and

5 “(F) labor organizations.

6 “(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may
7 award a grant under this subsection to a public or
8 private entity for use in accordance with this sub-
9 section.

10 “(4) AUTHORIZED USES.—An eligible entity de-
11 scribed in paragraph (3) shall use a grant provided
12 under this subsection to carry out an initiative—

13 “(A) to promote highway construction
14 worker career opportunities;

15 “(B) to support relevant outreach and
16 awareness efforts;

17 “(C) to develop relevant education and
18 training materials;

19 “(D) to provide life skills training, includ-
20 ing rudimentary math and other basis skills;
21 and

22 “(E) for related support services.”.

1 **SEC. 5. MILITARY SPOUSE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
2 **INITIATIVES.**

3 (a) EXTENSION AND EXPANSION OF REIMBURSE-
4 MENT OF MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UN-
5 DERGOING A PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION FOR PRO-
6 FESSIONAL RELICENSING COSTS OF ACCOMPANYING
7 SPOUSES.—

8 (1) EXTENSION.—Paragraph (4) of section
9 476(p) of title 37, United States Code, is amended
10 by striking “December 31, 2022” and inserting
11 “December 31, 2024”.

12 (2) EXPANSION OF QUALIFYING RELICENSING
13 COSTS.—Paragraph (5)(A) of that section is amend-
14 ed by striking “the original duty station” and insert-
15 ing “a previous duty station or home of record”.

16 (b) EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF MYCAREER
17 ADVANCEMENT ACCOUNT PROGRAM.—

18 (1) EXPANSION OF GRADES OF MEMBERS
19 WHOSE SPOUSES ARE ELIGIBLE.—The grades of
20 members of the Armed Forces whose spouses are eli-
21 gible for the MyCareer Advancement Account
22 (MyCAA) Program of the Department of Defense
23 shall include members in the additional grades as
24 follows:

25 (A) O–3.

26 (B) E–6.

1 (2) ADDITIONAL BENEFITS.—The benefits
 2 available under the MyCareer Advancement Account
 3 Program shall include scholarships usable by mili-
 4 tary spouses to attend or participate in any of the
 5 following:

6 (A) Vocational school.

7 (B) Professional licensure classes or tests.

8 (C) Clinical supervision hours in connec-
 9 tion with pursuit of a medical or health care de-
 10 gree.

11 **SEC. 6. LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM.**

12 Section 501(d)(3) of the Small Business Investment
 13 Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 695(d)(3)) is amended—

14 (1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through
 15 (L) as subparagraphs (B) through (M), respectively;

16 (2) by inserting before subparagraph (B), as re-
 17 designated by paragraph (1), the following:

18 “(A) workforce development through work-
 19 based or work-integrated training, which shall
 20 be satisfied by demonstrating that a small busi-
 21 ness concern that is a subject of the project
 22 has—

23 “(i) a documented in-house training
 24 program, the duration of which is not
 25 shorter than 12 weeks; or

1 “(ii) entered into a contract with an
2 entity—

3 “(I) to provide trained applicants
4 for any open position of employment
5 at the small business concern; and

6 “(II) that ensures that any appli-
7 cant provided to the small business
8 concern under subclause (I) has un-
9 dergone not fewer than 12 weeks of
10 training that is relevant to the open
11 position described in that subclause,”;
12 and

13 (3) in the flush text following subparagraph
14 (M), as redesignated by paragraph (1), in the second
15 sentence, by striking “subparagraphs (J) and (K)”
16 and inserting “subparagraphs (K) and (L)”.

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