

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

1 provider that is on the list under section
2 122(d) of the Workforce Innovation and
3 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3152(d));

4 (iv) provides a student, upon comple-
5 tion of the program, with a recognized
6 postsecondary credential that is recognized
7 by employers in the relevant industry, in-
8 cluding credentials recognized by industry
9 or sector partnerships in the relevant in-
10 dustry in the State or local area where the
11 industry is located and the job training
12 program is provided;

13 (v) has been determined by the school
14 (after validation of that determination by
15 an industry or sector partnership) to pro-
16 vide academic content, an amount of in-
17 structional time, and a recognized postsec-
18 ondary credential that are sufficient to—

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

21 (II) satisfy any applicable edu-
22 cational prerequisite requirement for
23 professional licensure or certification,
24 so that the student who completes the
25 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).

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