

## ***Relaunching America's Workforce Act (H.R. 602)***

**The Problem: As the nation endures a pandemic-induced recession, our public workforce system does not have the resources it needs to help jobseekers and employers participate in the recovery.**

The United States lost more than [22 million jobs](#) at the height of the 2020 recession and research suggests roughly [7 million](#) of these jobs will not come back. Unfortunately, these permanent COVID-19-related job losses are heavily concentrated among low-wage workers. The public workforce system is the nation's most important tool to help hard-hit workers transition into new career pathways. Now, more than ever, we must invest in state and local public workforce systems to ensure that jobseekers and employers are better positioned to participate in—and benefit from—the nation's economic recovery.

The public workforce system funds job training and career navigation support, wraparound services, and helps employers avoid layoffs through supporting the financing of on-the-job training and incumbent worker training. Jobseekers rely on the workforce system to help them develop new skills and connect with job openings.

The U.S. public workforce system has been chronically underfunded. Over the last decade, federal funding for public workforce programs has declined by roughly [40 percent](#) when adjusting for inflation. As a result, many local workforce systems do not have the resources they need to meet a surge in demand from newly unemployed workers and struggling businesses. In fact, in recent years, less than [20 percent](#) of program participants have been able to access training.

In response to the Great Recession, Congress passed the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (ARRA), which included a \$3.85 billion investment in the public workforce system, and an additional \$2 billion in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. In comparison, Congress has appropriated only \$345 million to support re-skilling workers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the record number of workers seeking unemployment coverage. Clearly, this historic economic downturn requires a historic response.

**Solution: Congress must pass the *Relaunching America's Workforce Act*, which will give hard-hit states and localities the resources they need to immediately assist employers and workers during this pandemic.**

The *Relaunching America's Workforce Act* authorizes \$15 billion in funding over the next three years to help employers keep workers on the job and help displaced or underemployed workers quickly re-enter the workforce as the economy emerges from its deepest decline since the Great Depression. The bill:

- Provides over \$11 billion to the state and local public workforce system to support dislocated workers, employers, youth, and adults who are seeking jobs;

- These funds will strengthen workforce training activities—including on-the-job training and registered apprenticeships—as well as career services—including career navigation support, online skills training, and employment services. The funds will also prioritize short-term training for health care and essential frontline workers.
- Invests \$1 billion in expanding the capacity of adult education providers to serve adults with low-literacy levels who have been negatively impacted by the economic consequences of the COVID-19 national emergency, including \$100 million reserved for adult education in correctional facilities;
- Invests \$1 billion in high-quality, work-based learning opportunities and career and technical education to prepare students for careers in high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and,
- Invests \$2 billion to restart the community college career training grant program, which was initiated during the last recession to help employers find talent in their local area, and provide individuals with career pathways to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand employment opportunities.

**The *Relaunching America’s Workforce Act* is cosponsored by:** Rep. Andy Levin (MI-09), Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01), Rep. Angie Craig (MN-02), Rep. Mark Pocan (WI-02), Rep. Lucy McBath (GA-06), Rep. Lori Trahan (MA-03), Rep. Joaquin Castro (TX-20), Rep. Steven Horsford (NV-04), Rep. Haley Stevens (MI-11), Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (MP), Rep. Adam Smith (WA-09), Rep. Alma Adams (NC-12), Rep. Joe Courtney (CT-02), Rep. Bill Foster (IL-11), Rep. Grace Meng (NY-06), Rep. Mark Takano (CA-41), Rep. Donald Norcross (NJ-01), Rep. Susan Wild (PA-07), Rep. Thomas Suozzi (NY-03), Rep. James Langevin (RI-02), and Rep. Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11).

**The *Relaunching America’s Workforce Act* is endorsed by:** Advance CTE, Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP), Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE), Goodwill Industries International, Inc., Home Builders Institute (HBI), Jobs for the Future (JFF), National Association of Counties (NACo), National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), National Association of Workforce Boards, National League of Cities (NLC), National Skills Coalition (NSC), New America, and YouthBuild USA.