

"Cheney, Scott (Budget)" <Scott\_Cheney@budget.senate.gov> 

FW: Bipartisan, Bicameral Group Announces Deal to Improve American Workforce Development System  
May 21, 2014 10:08 AM

---

Please distribute



## UNITED STATES CONGRESS



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MAY 21, 2014

CONTACT:

**HARKIN PRESS OFFICE**  
**(202) 224-3254**

**KLINE PRESS OFFICE**  
**(202) 226-9440**

**ALEXANDER PRESS OFFICE**  
**(202) 224-8584**

**MILLER PRESS OFFICE**  
**(202) 226-0853**

**MURRAY PRESS OFFICE**  
**(202) 224-2834**

**FOXX PRESS OFFICE**  
**(202)225-2071**

**ISAKSON PRESS OFFICE**  
**(202) 224-7777**

**HINOJOSA PRESS OFFICE**  
**(202) 225-2531**

**Bipartisan, Bicameral Group Announces Deal to Improve American**

## Workforce Development System

*After months of negotiations, leaders from House, Senate introduce Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*

**Current federal workforce laws, written in 1998, have been overdue for reauthorization for more than ten years**

(Washington, D.C.) - Today, a bipartisan, bicameral group of lawmakers announced that they have reached a deal to improve the nation's workforce development system through new legislation, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The bill, which will now be considered by both the House and Senate, modernizes and improves existing federal workforce development programs, helps workers attain skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs, and fosters the modern workforce that evolving American businesses rely on to compete.

WIOA represents a compromise between the SKILLS Act (H.R. 803), which passed the House of Representatives in March of 2013 with bipartisan support, and the Workforce Investment Act of 2013 (S. 1356), which passed through the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee with [a bipartisan vote of 18-3 in July of 2013](#).

A one-page summary of the legislation can be found [HERE](#).

The statement of managers, including a section-by-section summary of the legislation, can be found [HERE](#).

A summary of key improvements WIOA makes to current workforce development programs can be found [HERE](#).

The text of the bipartisan, bicameral agreement can be found [HERE](#).

*“Access to training, education, and employment services opens doors to the middle class for workers and helps strengthen our economy. This bipartisan, bicameral reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act will help ensure that all workers—including those with disabilities—can access these opportunities. It will provide better coordination and value to our workforce development system,” said Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), who is Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. “This bill also makes groundbreaking changes that will raise prospects and expectations for Americans with disabilities, many of whom, under current law, are shunted to segregated, subminimum wage settings without ever receiving the opportunities and skills to succeed in competitive, integrated employment. It will stem the flow of young people into segregated employment by requiring that they be given experience in integrated settings, and require state Vocational Rehabilitation programs to work with individuals to develop an individual employment plan and support them in integrated work settings. This bill truly represents the spirit of bipartisan compromise and cooperation, and I applaud my colleagues on the HELP Committee and on the Education and the Workforce Committee for their perseverance and commitment to updating this critical law. I urge senators on both sides of the aisle to support this bill when it comes up for a vote.”*

*“We can't expect a modern workforce to succeed with an outdated job training system. The current workforce development system is broken with too much bureaucracy, too many inefficiencies, and too little accountability,” said Representative John Kline (R-MN), Chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. “The problems we face have been apparent for a long time and I am pleased we are moving toward adopting comprehensive reform that provides employers, workers, and taxpayers the job training solutions they deserve. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House and Senate to send this agreement to the president's desk without delay.”*

*“Last year the federal government spent more than \$145 million in Tennessee through a maze of programs trying*

*to help Tennesseans find work,” said Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. “Our legislation will simplify that maze, give governors and states more flexibility, and make it easier for Tennessee’s 13 local workforce investment boards to match job seekers with the skills employers are looking for.”*

*“By revising the original Workforce Investment Act to support access to real-world education in fields that are in demand locally, this legislation will help more workers across the country find a good job or train for a new career. Similar to the legislation proposed by Reps. Tierney and Hinojosa earlier this Congress, this bill also makes job training programs more efficient and effective by requiring that states developed unified plans to streamline and better coordinate these services,” said Representative George Miller (D-CA), senior Democrat on the House Education and the Workforce Committee. “By strengthening the workforce development system, we will increase accountability, promote innovation, and make it easier to track results, while helping put more Americans back to work. I’m proud to have worked with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop this proposal and hope to see it signed into law this year.”*

*“Every year, federal workforce investments help millions of Americans get back to work, go back to school, and increase their skills for an economy that’s changing faster than ever, but for too long, we’ve been relying on workforce development programs written in the 1990s,” said Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), a senior member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. “This bipartisan, bicameral legislation will bring federal worker programs into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, give workers and students the resources they need to succeed, and foster a workforce that American businesses rely on to compete. It’s a prime example of what’s possible when Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate work together to write laws that help our economy grow. I want to thank Senator Isakson, who co-authored the Senate reauthorization bill with me, and all of my colleagues, for their hard work and commitment to moving this forward.”*

*“This is a good example of what Congress can achieve when we all come to the table and work towards a compromise that respects the opinions of legislators on both sides of the aisle,” said Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education and the Workforce Training. “This bill will eliminate fifteen duplicative programs, help the remaining programs better align worker education with available jobs and improve our ability to gauge how well the system is working as a whole. I want to thank my colleagues in the House for passing the SKILLS Act and my colleagues in the Senate for considering this long overdue re-authorization of the Workforce Investment Act.”*

*“Workforce investment and training is critically important to help grow the American economy still recovering from recession and to bridge the widening skills gap separating thousands of unemployed workers from good-paying jobs,” said Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), a senior member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. “I thank Senator Murray and my colleagues for their bipartisan efforts on this legislation, and I look forward to getting this measure passed so we can get Americans back to work and meet the modern demands of businesses employees in a global environment.”*

*“This bipartisan agreement helps American workers get back on track by promoting sector strategies and career pathways that lead to good jobs and postsecondary education in our nation’s public workforce training and adult education system.” said Representative Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX), the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Higher Education and the Workforce Training. “This bill makes certain that the connection between adult education, postsecondary education and the workforce is strengthened. We as a nation must be inclusive in our workforce, and this bill provides better services to workers young and old, with disabilities, and to those populations that have significant barriers to employment. It also addresses the need to improve services for English language learners that will ease their participation into our nation’s workforce. I am pleased to see the progress we are making in the Senate and in the House and look forward to having this bill signed into law.”*

###

**Sean Coit**

Press Secretary

Office of U.S. Senator Patty Murray

202-224-2834

[Get Updates from Senator Murray](#)

[@PattyMurray](#)

